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Title: An appraisal of the 7P's of marketing in respect of building surveying

Date: May 2007

Originally published as: University of Chester MBA dissertation

Example citation: Houghton, G. (2007). *An appraisal of the 7P's of marketing in respect of building surveying*. (Unpublished master's thesis). University of Chester, United Kingdom.

Version of item: Submitted version

University of Chester

An Appraisal of the 7 P`s of Marketing in Respect of Building Surveying

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dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the University of Chester for the degree of Master of Business Administration

CHESTER BUSINESS SCHOOL

May 2007

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My foremost thanks go to my esteemed supervisor, Gautam Rajkhowa. At times, this project felt like digesting an elephant. His unstinting support and guidance over the last three years, have given me the confidence, strength and determination to do it one teaspoonful at the time.

Many thanks go to all the individuals who have been interviewed for this research, for their generosity with time and insights. I would also like to thank my colleagues and professional friends for their continuing support throughout this period.

Finally, my deepest thanks and love go to my wife Cheryl for all her patience and words of encouragement and the sense of achievement she have attached to this enterprise.

Abstract

The key to long-term profitability for any professional is the creation of a service that states the needs and wants of one's clients and facilitates the exchange of those services in such a manner that provides value and satisfaction to the client. One creates these services through the combination and blend of a set of tools that are referred to as the marketing mix. We define the marketing mix as a set of controllable, tactical marketing tools that the firm blends to provide the result it wants in the target market.

It might be useful to use an analogy of a combination lock. In a typical combination lock, you need to know the pattern of three numbers to successfully open the lock. In marketing a firm's services, we attempt to take everything that the firm can do to influence the demand for its services and organise them in such a manner that best meets the needs, wants and desires of the customer. Many combinations are possible with marketing's controllable varables, know as the seven P`s. These P`s are product, price, place, promotion, physical evidence, processes and people (Kotler & Armstrong 2001).

Marketing has an important role to play as the organisation's interface with the environment. It is a "boundary-spanning organisational function through its constant interface with the external environment at large and with customers, competitors and channel members in particular" (Varadarajan 1992), as well as with the various groups within the organisation. The key role attributed to the marketing function is as a tool designed to maximise efficiency.

Marketing has been very reluctantly adopted as a management tool by the professions. This dissertation addresses how the 7Ps framework can be applied to professional services given the intensity and complexity of environmental pressures they have been subjected. The research has focused on an appraisal of the 7 Ps when applied to several Building Surveying firms based in both United Kingdom and Brisbane Australia.

The findings indicate that change within the building surveying profession only takes place if subjected to contingency pressures by their clients and, in general, it is slowed down due to the barriers of the profession itself. The study has revealed that building surveyors are torn between the pressures of change and the need for respectability and maintenance of the status quo. The adoption of the 7 P`s of the marketing mix has been proven to be a powerful driver for change in terms of initiating and leading the marketing process.

The review of perceptions of the concept and role of marketing within professional service firms has revealed generational differences, misconceptions and outright conflict leading to resistance to adopt the 7P`s framework in terms of its introduction and application, although professionals have individually practiced a wide variety of marketing activities in their pursuit of gaining and maintaining clients. There has been conspicuous resistance to the acceptance of marketing as a management tool across the building surveying professional service organisations.

Understanding on how marketing has being practiced within the professional organisation researched has been considered important in establishing the nature of the response to contingency and institutional forces. The research has been focused on the level of importance given to marketing as a strategic tool as opposed to the traditional tactical, communications mainly tool.

DECLARATION

As the 'owner' of the research and the dissertation I can declare this work as original and that I have not submitted it for any other academic purpose. I also declare that the work is mine and that all references to previous work - either by me or other authors - are fully referenced.

This work is original and has not been submitted previously for any academic purpose. All secondary sources are acknowledged.

Signed:

Date:

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce an appraisal of the 7 P`s of marketing in respect of Building Surveying professional service organisations. It will describe the rationale behind the decision in pursuing this topic, based on the empirical observations made by the researcher and other authors, which will be elaborated. Finally it will put forward the approach adopted in the structuring of this dissertation.

1.1 Rationale for the research topic

In 2007 the researcher joined Certis Pty Ltd in Brisbane Australia. Previously having been employed by Butler & Young Group – the largest private Building Control / Building Surveying company in UK as an Associate Director. One of the main reasons to join Certis was to promote the use of marketing to surveyors in Australia like he did back in the UK for the past nine years. Certis Pty Ltd was structured, like some but not all building surveying service firms at the time in the Australia, as a partnership of 4 directors whose background was mainly building surveying. The firm had a wide network of business connections, composed of pension companies, shopping centre owners, superannuation companies, national retailing companies and financial institutions providing the essential professional expertise for the their clients requirements that were the mainstay of Certis activities.

In this pervasive professional environment marketing had traditionally been viewed as 'taboo'. Nevertheless, here was a noticeable rising interest in marketing, to the point were the directors became interested in the possible use of certain elements of marketing within the firm. They were experiencing far stronger competitive pressures than they were used to, an increase in client sophistication demanding innovative and more complex professional advice in what seemed to be a rapidly changing environment. None of the directors had any discernible expertise in marketing although they understood its management function within the commercial organisation they invested in. As stated by Barwise and Meehan (1999) "Marketing came into the vocabulary of (professional service firms) along with the relaxation of regulations preventing advertising and unsolicited direct contact with non – clients".

Certis directors were unsure on what marketing meant and in particular the use of the marketing mix and the 7 P`s. Also they were unsure what it could do for them and the firm. There was confusion as to its meaning, was it advertising, was it selling or a combination of the two? Was the marketing mix supposed to bring in new clients or look after the old ones, promote the firm or the directors or just promote their services? There was also confusion as to marketing's role in the management and development of the firm.

Throughout the nine years spent at Butler & Young, the researcher observed directors` involvement with marketing being sketchy, an effort that was fragmented and localised. Marketing was perceived as a marginal support function less important than IT, internal accounting or recruitment. Marketing planning was seen as a tolerable novelty and not in any way part of a strategic business plan. The allocation of resources to marketing practice was limited and there were no measurement and controls in place linking the firm's performance to the marketing activities performed.

Because of the lack of knowledge about marketing and the misconceptions about marketing, the firm might employ the services of a PR or advertising agency whose specialisation would influence the marketing activities of the firm. In effect, it was an abdication of responsibilities, a view, which has been supported by Morgan (1991). He summed up this stereotypical response of the professional service firms to the marketing issue. He said,

"The challenge of marketing to many professional service firms represents a large 'black box' filled with myths and half-truths, ambiguity in terms of the role of professionals and marketing, a dearth of information from both within and outside the profession, budget implications for the partnership and above all a surrounding background of uncertainty. Unable to face the uncertainty around the marketing 'black box' the responsibility is shifted from senior management of firm to individual partner, from marketing partner first to outside consultant and then to internal marketer who will further delegate many marketing tasks to subordinates and outside consultants"

The main research question can be formulated succinctly thus:

"Appraisal of the 7 P`s of Marketing in Respect of Building Surveying"

Specifically, it has been necessary to split this research question into objectives to be achieved, namely:

- Understanding of theoretical foundations based on existing literature of both marketing of services and the marketing mix
- Deeper understanding through a clearer definition of how building surveying firms (both in United Kingdom and Brisbane Australia) understand the elements of the marketing mix
- Better understanding of the types of the barriers and the theory behind the phenomenon of the marketing mix with building surveying firms. Compare and contrast with those actually used within firms
- To draw conclusions and make recommendations if applicable to firms using their marketing mix to its full marketing potential

These objectives have been at the core of the present research and have provided the framework for the dissertation as follows in the section below.

1.2 Chapter review

Chapter 2 Literature review

In order to place the research in context this chapter begins by outlining the theoretical framework underpinning this research. It begins with a discussion of the concept of the marketing mix and the elements that constitute the mix, as there is a considerable variability in the usage of these terms in the literature.

Chapter 3 Marketing services

This chapter is providing an in depth look at what service marketing is and its evolution. It provides a review of the currently accepted definitions of marketing and the history behind each definition. The chapter is an outline of both the intellectual and the pragmatic sides of marketing as well as the ongoing changes that are occurring within marketing management, as a body of knowledge, theory and practice.

Chapter 4 Marketing of construction services

This chapter critically examines the traditional building surveying professional organisation and the radical transformation the construction industry has undergone in recent years. It examines its responses to the environmental pressures of increased competition, more demanding and sophisticated customers, deregulation, technological advancement and globalisation. The chapter focuses on twenty of the participants chosen for this research.

Chapter 5 Methodology

This chapter starts with a description of the understanding of the philosophical issues on which the research design is based. It discusses the different approaches and strategies to the research and will show the logical step-by-step approach to the choices made in the data collection and analysis methods used. Throughout it reviews the various problems related to the primary and secondary research process and the solutions adopted.

Chapter 6 Marketing mix

This chapter provides an exploration of the relevant theoretical framework and puts forward a theoretical model that would explain the how to use the 7P`s tool increases the marketing within building surveying service firms. The approach and its relevance to theory building and research in marketing have also been identified.

Chapter 7 Findings

This chapter is an in-depth discussion of the research findings in respect to the perceptions of and the responses to contingency and pressures by the professional organisations and its attitude towards the 7 P`s concept as a management tool. It explores the acceptance or rejection of marketing mix as a marketing agent by building surveyors firms. Finally it discusses the level of adoption of the marketing mix as a strategic agent in maximising organisational effectiveness.

Chapter 8 Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter is a summary of the dissertation. It summarises the approach undertaken in order to fulfil the requirements of the question and its aims. It sets out the findings of the research before drawing the dissertation to a conclusion. It also provides an assessment of the value of the research done and it is an outline of possible future research strands.

2. Literature review

It is now just over 30 years since McCarthy (1964) offered the "marketing mix", often referred to as the "four Ps", as a means of translating marketing planning into practice. The *product*, (which we will understand to relate in a general sense to both products and services throughout this dissertation), tailored for maximum customer benefit, *priced* according to the buyer's ability to afford the product, made available for the customer to buy (*place*) and *promoted* in order that potential buyers knew as much as required about the product on offer. In effect, the concept of the marketing mix outlines a course of action for the organisation using controllable variables in an environment where many factors are uncontrollable, defined generally as the external market.

Kotler (1967) broadened this classification to include customer, environmental, competitive and marketing decision variables. This classification implied that the marketing decision variables referred to were in fact the internal and controllable marketing variables. Borden (1964), who focuses more on manufacturing industries, defines the four external forces on the organisation as consumers' buying behaviour, trade behaviour, competitors' position and behaviour and government regulations. Robins (1991) offers an alternative mnemonic to the marketing mix in the "four Cs". These are defined as *customers*, (who buy goods and / or services in the market place), *competitors*, (who provide the choice of alternative sources of supply), *capabilities* and *company*, (both of which refer to the organisation which has the ability to satisfy customer needs). Such a list embraces Kotler's (1967) classification, except for the macro-environmental issues, and brings together internal and external factors, although not in any strongly cohesive way.

Policy is often one of the key issues in the decision processes which bind organisations to customers and clients in the marketplace. Booms and Bitner (1981) recognised this by introducing three additional factors to the marketing mix elements, namely *people*, *process* and *physical evidence*. This emphasises that the earlier four Ps model (McCarthy, 1964) might lead to narrow a focus on internal variables and does not include some of the process variables which also form part of the marketing planning system.

Buyers, in general, do not approach the adoption of products and services with a detailed knowledge of the marketing mix elements. On the contrary, customers look for, and derive satisfaction from, benefits which are organised through product and service features. Marketing colleagues will have rehearsed these concepts much more thoroughly than space allows here.

The marketing mix concept is one of the core concepts of marketing theory. However, in recent years, the popular version of this concept McCarthy's (1964) 4P`s has increasingly come under attack with the result that different marketing mixes have been put forward for different marketing contexts. While numerous modifications to the 4Ps framework have been proposed (Kotler, 1986; Mindak and Fine, 1981; Nickels and Jolson, 1976; Waterschoot and Bulte. 1992) the most concerted criticism has come from the services marketing area. In particular Booms and Bitner's (1981) extension of the 4Ps framework to include process, physical evidence and participants, has gained widespread acceptance in the services marketing literature. The proliferation of numerous ad hoc conceptualizations has undermined the concept of the marketing mix and what is required is a more coherent approach. It is my contention that Booms and Bitner's (1981) extended marketing mix for services should be extended to other areas of marketing. Borden claims to be the first to have used the term "marketing mix" and that it was suggested to him by Culliton's (1948) description of a business executive as "mixer of ingredients".

The term marketing mix (Borden, 1964) or the classical four Ps (McCarthy, 1960) have been used to describe these various elements. Marketing strategy development may therefore be viewed as developing a marketing mix aimed at satisfying the needs of selected markets and accomplishing specific marketing objectives. It is important to note that all activities are affected by two general kinds of variables:

(1) those relating to the marketing mix.

(2) those relating to the marketing environment (see Figure 1).

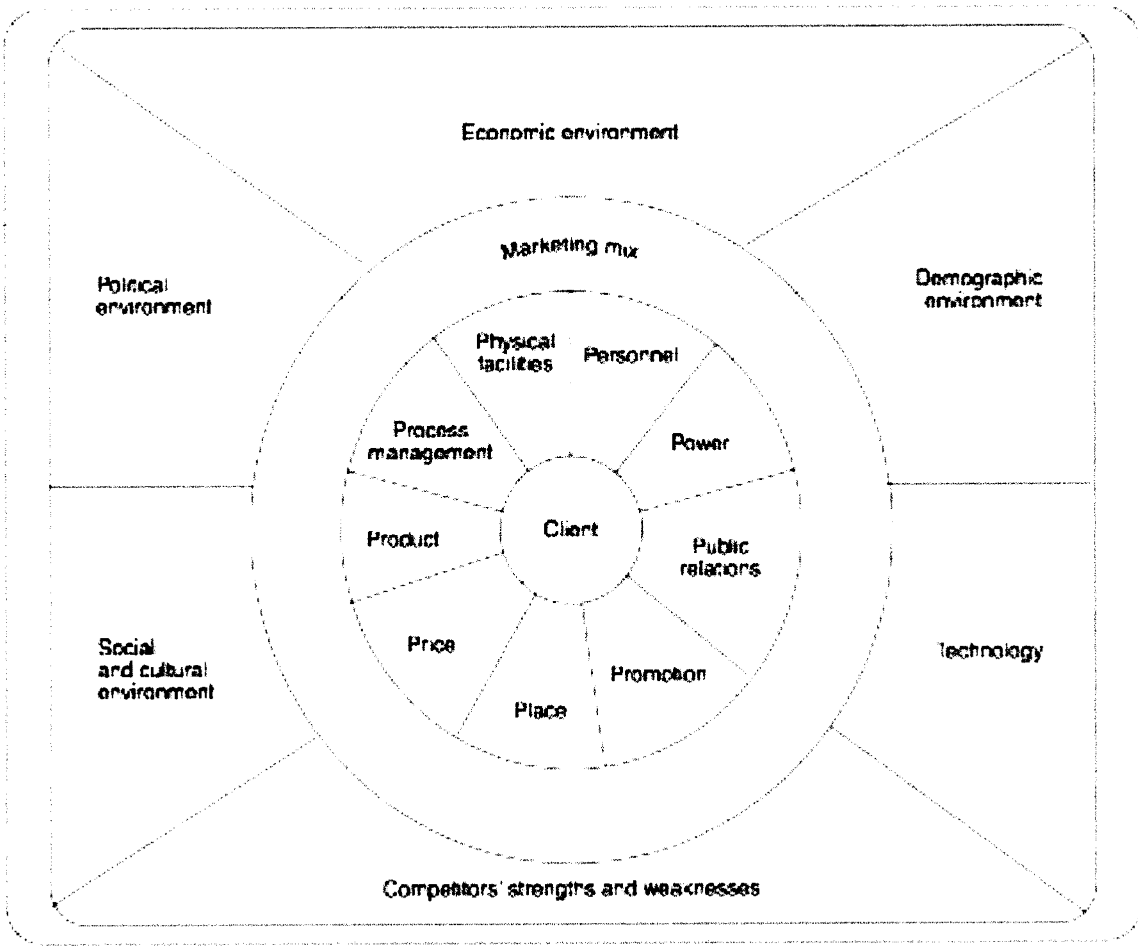

Figure 1 An Overview of the Marketing Environment

However, Borden did not formally define the marketing mix, to him it simply consisted of important elements or ingredients that make up a marketing programme (Borden 1965). McCarthy (1964) refined this further and defined the marketing mix as a combination of all of the factors at a marketing manager's command to satisfy the target market. More recently McCarthy and Perreault (1987) have defined the marketing mix as the controllable variables that an organisation can co-ordinate to satisfy its target market. This definition (with minor changes) is widely accepted as can be seen from Kotler and Armstrong's definition of the marketing mix:

"as the set of controllable marketing variables that the firm blends to produce the response it wants in the target market".

Low and Tan (1995) suggest that marketing mix concept has two important benefits. First, it is an important tool used to enable one to see that the marketing manager's job is, in a large part, a matter of trading off the benefits of one's competitive strength in the marketing mix against the benefits of others. The second benefit of the marketing mix is that it helps to reveal another dimension of the marketing manager's job. McCarthy (1960 & 1964) initially defined the elements in the marketing mix, the 4Ps, as the controllable variables that an organisation can co-ordinate to satisfy its target market. The 4P`s of the marketing mix – product, price, place and promotion are briefly described as follows (Copley, 2004).

(1) Product: The item or service being marketed, through its features, quality, benefits and quantities.

(2) Price: This includes the price of the item and product assortments and lines, price changes and payment methods.

(3) Place: The location where the product or service is available to the customer, including distribution channels.

(4) Promotion: Market communication is achieved by personal selling, advertising, direct marketing, public relations, sales promotion and sponsorship.

Booms and Bitner (1981) suggested 7P`s mix which they extended the traditional 4P`s with including 3P`s: People, Physical Evidence and Process. The 7P`s of marketing mix have been conducted by some researchers in marketing fields e.g. Low and Tan (1995), Pheng and Ming (1997) & Melewar and Saunders (2000).

The essence of the marketing mix concept is, therefore, the idea of a set of controllable variables or a "tool kit" (Shapiro 1985) at the disposal of marketing management which can be used to influence customers. The disagreement in the literature is over what these controllable variables or tools are. The elements of the marketing mix Borden, in his original marketing mix, had a set of 12 elements namely:

(1) product planning
(2) pricing
(3) branding
(4) channels of distribution
(5) personal selling
(6) advertising
(7) promotions
(8) packaging
(9) display
(10) servicing
(11) physical handling
(12) fact finding and analysis

He did not consider this list of elements to be fixed or sacrosanct and suggested that others may have a different list to his. Other suggested frameworks include Frey's (1961) suggestion that marketing variables should be divided into two parts: the offering (product, packaging, brand, price, service) and the methods and tools (distribution channels, personal selling, advertising, sales promotion and publicity). Lazer and Kelly (1962) and Lazer et al. (1973), on the other hand, suggest three elements: the goods and services mix, the distribution mix and the communication mix. However, the most popular and most enduring marketing mix framework has been that of McCarthy who regrouped and reduced Borden's 12 elements to the now popular 4P`s, namely: product, price, promotion and place (McCarthy, 1964). Each of these categories consists of a mix of elements in itself and hence one can speak of the "product mix", "the promotion mix", and so forth. For instance, Kotler and Armstrong list advertising, personal selling, sales promotion and publicity under the heading of promotion. The 4P`s formulation is so popular, in fact, that some authors of introductory textbooks define the marketing mix synonymously with the 4P`s (Pride and Ferrell (1989) and Stanton et al. (1991).

In subsequent years, different versions of the marketing mix have been suggested. A widely accepted definition of the marketing mix is the simplified four Ps of marketing – product, price, place and promotion – proposed by McCarthy (1960). Although the four P`s seem succinctly to capture the marketing elements suggested by others (e.g. Borden, 1964); Swartz (1973) observed that some experts believe that packaging and public relations should be recognised as distinctive marketing mix variables rather than sub-functions of the four Ps.

Expanding the marketing mix to include public relations has been suggested by Mindak and Fine (1981) and Kotler (1986). Kotler (1986) also suggest that political power be included as an element of the marketing mix. Wind (1986) proposed that there are 11 P`s of marketing which in addition to the traditional four P`s include positioning, politically-based marketing tools, public relations and public affairs, portfolios of markets and products at three levels of analysis, and a program which cohesively integrates the entire marketing mix. It should be noted that several authors recently have taken issue with the basic viability of the four P`s for today's marketers. Gronroos (1994), for example, argues that the four P`s model is obsolete. One can counter-argue, however, that the traditional four P`s continue to be the key elements which can be manipulated by marketers to satisfy customer needs and gain a competitive advantage. Gronroos (1994) suggested an emerging paradigm shift toward relationship marketing, relationships being an anchor point on a continuum of commitment, with the other anchor point being transactional marketing. The traditional four P`s are still relevant tools at any point on the continuum. Furthermore, an organisation's employees constitute an additional resource which management can use to shift toward relationship marketing and / or to gain a competitive advantage. Incorporating employees into an organization's marketing mix, as the people-power element, was originally proposed and modeled for manufacturing firms engaged in business-to-business marketing in a field sales setting (Judd, 1987). That model, in an industrial setting, was recognised and referenced by Gross et al. (1993). Parkinson (1988) attempted to apply the model in the small-business sector, while others have referenced the model in a generalised marketing context (Christopher et al., 1993; Walls & Self, 1995; Harris, 1999). Judd (2001) expanded the original people-power concept to nonprofit organisations and the inclusion of volunteers and board members as the organisation's "people." It is now being proposed that the people-power concept is generic and is appropriate for any organisation.

In general, people and organisations have wants and needs, and it is the duty of marketing to respond to these wants and needs. But what of the integrity of the customer? Buyer disposition suggests that buyers are disposed to buy products and services, but from the opposite direction to that suggested by the concept of the marketing mix. Buyer disposition proposes in fact that buyers are disposed to seek satisfaction in different dimensions.

As the author of this dissertation I have defined this customer sourcing activity as "buyer disposition". Buyer disposition is to the customer what marketing is to the organisation. Buyer disposition can be considered as the process whereby the potential customer thinks through, evaluates, seeks counsel about, reflects on and finally decides on a suitable source of supply for the product or service in question. In effect, the definition of buyer disposition is offered as the process undertaken by the customer, consumer or client when attempting to source the supply of a product or service, or a combination of these two elements.

Within this dissertation, the words customer, client and consumer are intended to refer to those individuals who are disposed to source products and / or services either for themselves as individuals, or on behalf of dependents, or as professional purchasers with organisational responsibility. It is interesting to note that marketing often has to differentiate between product and service marketing techniques, whereas it is the belief of the author that buyer disposition embraces most, if not all, products and services in relation to sourcing.

This applies especially to capital goods, fast-moving consumer goods, public, financial and professional services, care and not-for-profit / charitable services. Buyer disposition has five dimensions, namely value, viability, volume, variety and virtue.

However there is a substantial difference between services and goods and this difference deserves a separate treatment in terms of marketing. Consumers evaluate goods and services differently and research studies (Ettenson and Turner, 1997) have represented services as a "distinct group of market offerings". Zeithaml and Bitner (2000) define services as deeds, processes and performances that are produced not only by service businesses but are also integral to the offerings of many manufactured – goods producers. Mills and Moshavi (1999) consider that, "Although a service is generally viewed as a deed, a performance or an effort which is rendered by a service provider for a client, it demands both client and service provider participation".

Professional services have an interactive nature and their production and consumption are often simultaneous. This view is also supported by Yorke (1990) who says, "Any service offering depends, for its long-term success, on the dyadic relationship which exists between a supplier and a client".

He considers that most professional services are intangible dominant and their essence lies in the symbolic status of the personnel involved. This assertion is of significant importance for this dissertation as it links the delivery of service to the legitimacy of the service provider. Yorke's definition of a professional is a service provider, "...(who can) claim competence in a fairly narrow and well defined body of knowledge and set of skills which are guarded and / or controlled by a formal body or institution to which they are admitted". Professional services, say Ettenson and Turner (1997) are offered, "...(by) those professions that have a recognised group identity and that require extensive training and advanced study in a specialised field". These definitions are also supported by Brown and Swartz (1989) who view that besides the professional-client relationship, professionals have a unique set of characteristics, "Professionals typically have advanced degrees, meet credentialing requirements and often hold equity positions in their organisations".

Their uniqueness is emphasised by their sense of responsibility to the public and by a degree of independence to such an extent that any interference is impossible from clients or other individuals not admitted into their profession (Yorke, 1990). In order to qualify as a professional a number of elements have to be present in an occupation, as suggested by Gumesson (1997):

a). The existence of specialist know-how, experience and methods.

b). The presence of individuals providing the service.

c). A particular approach to carrying out an assignment.

d). The provision of a solution to the problem.

Another set of criteria by which professional services can be distinguished from other services has been put forward by Yorke (1990). He states that professional services are:

a). Advisory and focused on problem solving.

b). Provided by a qualified professional known for his / her speciality under a specific title.

c). Include an assignment requested by the client either on a voluntary basis or as required by statute.

d). Provided by a professional who is independent and not connected with other suppliers.

e). Supervised by professional associations which attempt to define the nature of the profession, to lay down requirements of competence, to control the practice of the profession and to enforce a code of ethics.

There is however a degree of ambiguity in the existing body of literature in respect to the relationship between the client and the professional versus the relationship between the client and the partnership. It is therefore quite relevant to explore the unique characteristics of the professional services through a parallel drawn between marketing performed in a business-to-business context by the professional firm compared to a non-professional organisation.

The construction industry has unique characteristics which are related to its structure, production process, physical characteristics and composition. Those characteristics go a long way towards explaining methods of production, organisation, price determination, payment methods, financial decision and control, and an industrial structure unlike those met in other sectors. Hence the construction process generates management problems and opportunities at the level of the firm which may differ in scope, scale, time and the type of appropriate solutions from those met in firms of other industries.

Hillebrandt and Cannon (1990) suggested that these characteristics fall into four main groups:

(1) The physical nature of the product and the method of production.

(2) The structure of the industry, including the relationship between the main groups in the industry and their interaction in the construction process.

(3) Determinants of demand, why clients invest in building and construction services.

(4) Methods of price determination, i.e. tendering and competitive bidding.

This sequential arrangement of works leads to the general build-up of a large number of task organisations which become temporarily, although not simultaneously, part of a larger project organisation (Morgan and Morgan, 1990). The involvement of many organisations in one project provides a strong basis for conflicts during the construction process, largely due to domain of consensus, accessibility of information, interdependency of tasks, and individual performance (Fisher, 1989).

The construction industry is one which is under serious scrutiny by professional institutions. The activities of the enterprises within the industry are subject to several restrictions and guidelines. Contractors and designers alike are constantly looking for new methods of production which are cost effective, with a view to ensuring cheaper estimates and tighter quotations. Hence the question of how to improve production standards in terms of time, cost effectiveness and quality assurance is under constant review. The general attitude has been that good work will attract new jobs, as will moving in circles in which the client might be encountered. The difficulties met by companies in the attempts to develop and integrate marketing policy into their strategic planning and to accommodate marketing activities into their organisational framework have been highlighted by Yisa et al. (1995).

These difficulties are primarily due to the following reasons:

- In the past, construction enterprises have never met with difficulties in obtaining the required level of work to maintain survival and profit.

- Many senior managers in the industry have always believed that the most important part of the organisation is the production side, i.e. they are production rather than marketing oriented.

- Only clients can create demand for work and they themselves cannot do so.

- The nature of the industry is such that it is not capable of being planned, i.e. its dynamic environment prevents any long and medium-term planning.

- Traditionally, the construction industry has been a family business, passing from one generation to the next. As a result, even large construction companies today are still family owned. Consequently, many heads of these companies are conservative and still remain loyal to traditional methods of business passed down by their ancestors.

The construction industry faces a continuous circle of changes in workload, work mix and the method of managing the changes and, by definition, changing its product all the time. One of the consequences of these many changes is that the construction firms are moving closer to their clients who are themselves becoming more sophisticated and are often now the driving force for improvements in the construction process. One consequence of these changes is that of increasing competition among construction firms, while at the same time the industry experiences continuous decline as a result of a prolonged and punitive recession. It should, however, be noted that the concepts of competition and marketing are closely related.

While competition stimulates invention, development and efficiency, developments in marketing have, to a great extent, been helpful in postulating the appropriate direction of the relationship between demand and supply, which in turn affects the analysis of the competition (Pearce, 1992). Flexibility and diversity are needed to provide favourable conditions during the initial stages of the creative process and for exploring new areas in company problem solving (Lansley et al., 1979; Pearce, 1992).

As an industry which is often used to regulate the economy as a whole, the construction industry has hardly been static. There have been numerous significant changes in the UK construction industry in the last two decades. These changes have demanded different corporate strategies, which in turn have required firms to structure their operations in different ways for their senior managers to adopt different styles and for management teams to draw on different problem-solving skills. While some construction firms have been very successful in responding to changing needs and opportunities, using technological innovation and contractual development to provide competitive advantage, others have failed by being static (Betts and Ofori, 1992). The ability to distinguish between effective and ineffective construction firms in terms of how far management of change by any firm has enhanced the overall capability of the industry has been dependent on the ability of the clients. Furthermore, the desire for the firms to change has come more from a fear of being left behind by competitors than from a belief in the benefits of innovation (Burns and Stalker, 1961).

The construction environment of the 1960s was characterised by long-term stability. The early 1970s saw major changes in the business environment of the construction industry, the three-day week (1972), the building strike (1972), the oil crisis (1973), the moratorium on public expenditure (1975-1976) and the sterling crisis of 1976. These gave rise to suggestions for the need for control, boundary regulations, organizational models, management style which incorporates production and corporate orientation (Lansley et al., 1975; Lea et al., 1974). The 1980s saw a change in attitude among major construction clients who were determined to exercise greater control over the construction process. Cost inflation, disharmony among construction team members, excessive project times and poor quality, characteristics of the 1960s and 1970s, were no longer to be tolerated. Furthermore, the margin between a viable and non-viable investment has become narrower.

Previous experience with the industry, especially in the area of quality, has been disappointing (Burns & Stalker, 1961; Sadler and Barry, 1970). Unfavourable comparisons between UK construction industry performance and the industries of other countries also became very much in evidence (Flanagan & Norman, 1989; Moodley, 1994).

Likewise, bodies representing corporate clients and consumer bodies have increasingly challenged the methods by which the industry operates (British Property Federation, 1993). Another area of significant changes in the industry is in technological developments, especially recent developments in information technology. There have been rapid advances in information technology in recent times which, according to Barrett (1993), pose both threats and opportunities to the construction professions. Barrett argued that on the one hand, there is the danger that the professionals will become unnecessary as information technology makes expertise more widely available, possibly through expert systems. It is now possible to make phone calls, link up with computers anywhere, manipulate existing data, and make quick and accurate responses to clients' requests (Moodley, 1994). Efficient market forecasts, and political and economic predictions are now easily available as a result of developments in information technology. Consequently, information on new projects is easily accessible to a greater number of competitors than it was before. Project information can now be obtained through the electronic media and print media, either in the form of advertisements or news items.

The fluctuations in output were inevitable because of changes in economic fortunes which affected both internal and external events in the industry. More recently, the downturn in the British economy and worldwide recession have raised the question of how turnover and profitability can be improved by the construction company. The case of adopting marketing in the industry began to receive attention in the 1970s (Bell, 1981; Moore, 1984) with the realisation that continuous survival depends on securing an adequate workload through appropriate marketing strategies (Fisher, 1989; Morgan & Morgan, 1990).

Traditionally, professional firms have obtained new work by being well known in the community (Pearce, 1992) and among their professional peers and not necessarily by making overt approaches to potential clients. Contractors, on the other hand, relied on the goodwill of these professional firms for an opportunity to obtain "third-party" contracts and were therefore reluctant to seek direct contact with clients (Huru, 1992; Pearce, 1992).

The competitive processes by which building projects are awarded are through competitive tendering and negotiated tenders. Within the UK construction industry, the predominant element of competition is price.

Of all the changes the most far-reaching have been in:

- the structure of the industry;
- procurement methods;
- construction processes;
- client organisations;
- technology;
- political and economic environments.

According to Morgan & Morgan (1991), marketing within the professional sector is considered at worst as an alien concept, and at best as a new development that is viewed with scepticism. This situation is in direct contrast to the role of marketing in the consumer goods industry (Gummesson, 1979), where marketing is accepted as one of the corner stones of servicing the needs of clients and customers. Initial theoretical investigations into the marketing of professional services derive from the United States (e.g., Wittreich, 1966; Turner, 1969; Kotler & Connor, 1977). According to Bloom (1984), the need exists to distinguish between this field and the marketing of goods and non-professional services, as these concepts and approaches are not easily transferred to the professional service context.

The body of literature on the marketing of professional quantity surveying services is scant, with few empirical studies having been undertaken. The little published literature that does exist comments on the building surveying profession in a changing environment, discussing new roles and responsibilities rather than on marketing development *per se* (Knowles, 1986; Davis, 1992). Morgan & Morgan (1991) report a similar situation prevailing in the engineering consultancy profession, with the bulk of the literature being prescriptive in nature and based on the experiences and observations of American practising marketing consultants rather than on academic research (Cooper, 1978; Jones, 1983; Jacobs, 1986). However, a more generic outlook on marketing in the professional services sector is available (Kotler & Connor, 1977; Lidstone, 1984), paying attention to consulting engineering practices combined with several other professional services.

Early references identifying differences between tangibles and intangibles underlying the distinctive character of services marketing are found in the works of Branton(1969) and Wilson(1972),. During the 70's more researchers emphasised the special character of the services (Blois, 1974, Bessom & Jackson, 1975, Shostack, 1977); several alternative methodologies and marketing conceptual frameworks for services marketing have been proposed ever since. The services marketing domain gradually acquired a distinct position among other marketing sub-disciplines. Two reasons contributed to this development:

a. Services have become major generators of economic activity and substantial source of corporate revenue in western post-industrial economies.

b. Service became increasingly part of physical products, as element of the augmented product dimension (Kotler et al., 2001, Jobber, 2001). As such, service became significant parameter of product differentiation and important basis of competitive advantages.

The special nature of services and the proposed approaches to services marketing are summarised below (Table 1).

All reviewed authors agree on the special character of services vs. tangibles and highlight the need for specific management attitudes when dealing with services marketing issues.
- A key factor distinguishing the services marketing from marketing of physical products is the human element, often included as new parameter in the services marketing mix. (Booms & Bitner, 1981, Cowell, 1984, Heuvel, 1993, Melewar & Saunders, 2000, Grove et al., 2000). The human factor underlines the personal nature of the services marketing; service providers play a double role in the marketing process as service delivering factors: the personnel is a powerful element tool of customer persuasion and a major parameter affecting the customer's perception on the delivered service quality.

Interaction and quality are often identified as two issues missing in the 4P framework, yet requiring special attention in services marketing. Furthermore the personal character of services makes the quality standardisation a difficult and challenging task. (Rushton & Carson, 1989, Fryar, 1991, Beckwith, 2001).

One-to-One communication and relationship building are also fundamental elements of the services marketing not adequately addressed by the 4Ps (Doyle, 1994), English, 2000). Most reviewed researchers resist the idea of applying the 4Ps as the single tool for designing services marketing, proposing either the addition of new elements to the Mix or its substitution by different approaches.

Booms and Bitner, 1981	Recognising the special character of the services as products, they demonstrated the importance of Environmental factors (Physical Evidence) influencing the quality perception. They included the Participants (personnel and customers) and the Process of service delivery as the additional Marketing Mix factors.	The Services Marketing Mix includes next to the 4Ps three more P's: - Participants - Physical Evidence - Process
Cowell, 1984	Three aspects justifying the revision of the original Marketing mix framework: - the original mix was developed for manufacturing companies - empirical evidence suggesting that marketing practitioners in the service sector find the marketing mix not being inclusive enough for their needs	Adopts the framework proposed by Booms and Bitner
Brunner, 1989	The 4P Marketing mix elements must be extended to include more factors affecting the services marketing thus becoming mixes themselves	- Concept Mix - Cost Mix - Channels Mix - Communication Mix
Ruston and Carson, 1989	The unique characteristics of the services –intangibility, inseparability, perishability and variability – make the control of the marketing process, using the generalised tools of marketing, inadequate	New instruments and concepts must be developed to explain and manage the services intangibility
Fryar, 1991	Segmentation and differentiation is the basis of successful positioning of services. Furthermore the personal relationship with the customer and the quality of the service are important elements of the services Marketing	The Marketing of services requires: - Differentiation based on segmentation and positioning - Customer contact - Unique vision on quality
Heuvel, 1993	Interaction between the one delivering the service and the customer is very important and has direct effect on the service quality and quality perception. The Product element can be better demonstrated as having two components, the primary and secondary service elements as well as the process	The Services Marketing Mix: - Personnel - Product - Place - Price - Promotion
Doyle, 1994	While recognising that the content of the 4Ps in the service sector is somehow different from that of the tangibles he does accept the 4Ps as the elements of the services marketing mix. He identifies special difficulties in Promotion and Place preferring to replace them by the terms Communication and Distribution	Service Marketing Mix: - Product - Price - Communication - Distribution
Melewar, Saunders, 2000.	The Corporate Visual Identity System (CVIS) is the basis of the corporate differentiation and the core of the company's visual identity	A new P must be added to the 4Ps of the Marketing Mix (and the 3Ps of the Services Mix) namely the - Publications
English, 2000	The traditional Marketing has never been an effective tool for health services marketing	A new framework emerges, emphasising the 4 Rs - Relevance - Response - Relationships - Results
Grove et al., 2000	Services Marketing can be compared to a theatrical production. How the service is performed is as important as what is performed. Critical factor is therefore the customer experience. The traditional Marketing Mix does not adequately capture the special circumstances that are present when marketing a service product	Four strategic theatrical elements constitute the Services Experience: - Actors - Audience - Setting - Performance These elements must be added to the extended services Marketing Mix model of Booms and Bitner
Beckwith, 2001	Marketing services in a changing world requires focusing on increasing the customer satisfaction and rejecting old product paradigms and marketing fallacies.	The four keys of Modern (services) Marketing - Price - Brand - Packaging - Relationships

Table 1 Review of Services Marketing Literature

3. Marketing of Services

3.1 Characteristics of Services

The marketing of services, while sharing some similarities with physical goods, has some inherent difference. The professional service providers must fully understand these differences. Further, the criterion for satisfaction is different and the customer particulates in the process. Therefore, different services have different characteristics – making it impossible to devise a generic marketing strategy for all services (Zeithmal *et al*, 1996). The relevant characteristics have been identified as (Zeithaml *et al*, 1996):

3.1.1 *Intangibility*

The inability to store the service, to protect it through a patent, display the service or set a standard price to it is associated with marketing strategies involving the informal personalisation of the service (e.g., by word of mouth) and post purchase communication. It is the fundamental distinguishing characteristic of services (Bateson, 1977; Berry, 1980; Lovelock, 1981; Rathmell, 1966; Shostack, 1977), they being generally heterogeneous, perishable and with simultaneous production and consumption (Zeithaml *et al*, 1996; Assael, 1993; Sasser, 1976). With services, the emphasis is on performance that, unlike manufactured products, cannot be stored, seen, tasted, touched, readily displayed, or communicated. For example, people undergoing cosmetic surgery cannot fully see the results before the purchase and an individual involved in a lawsuit cannot know the outcome before the end of a trial. An individual hiring an Architect doesn't have the completed plans before agreeing the transaction. As a result, the clients attempt to reduce uncertainty by looking for "signals" of service quality. They draw conclusions about service quality from the physical evidence, equipment used, people involved, or the communication they have been exposed to. The service professional needs to provide a tangible representation that communicates the likely service process and outcome. It is also difficult to set a standardised price on services, which means that quality control is difficult to achieve (Zeithaml *et al*, 1996; Berry, 1980).

In addition, the production process of a service often involves others too, making it centralised mass production difficult (Zeithmal *et al*, 1996).

3.1.2 *Inseparability*

The problems occurring when the consumers (and other consumers) are involved in the process of production are addressed using multi-sites, managing the consumer and emphasising the selection and training of public personnel. Also because the service cannot be separated from the service provider, how that individual is perceived, his or her professionalism, appearance and demeanour will all be sued in judging the quality of the service firm. This inseparability carries over too those individuals who answer the phones for the organisation or occupy the receptionist's desk. They often provide the first impressions prospective clients get of the service organisation. Finally, inseparability of protection and consumption points to multi site locations, a consideration relevant to the penetration of foreign markets by international service firms. It emphasises franchising as a valid method for entering and understanding overseas markets. In so-called "product marketing", the product has been offered as the link between the customer and the company. Since in service marketing the "product" is essentially intangible, it is suggested here that the linkage will be made via the various tangible representations of the service and the people who provide / use it. Therefore, buyers-sellers relationships become very critical in service marketing.

3.1.3 *Heterogeneity*

Because serviced is inseparable from people, the quality of the services delivered to clients can vary. The best lawyer can make a mistake, the best accountant can miss a number, and the best doctor can have a bad day. The implications of heterogeneity in services are twofold. Because we know that mistakes can happen, we can develop processes that attempt to minimise these mistakes. For example, accountants can use software packages that minimise potential mistakes by tallying income returns and an architect can use computer simulations to test for structural problems before a building is built. However, even with the best preventative system, mistakes can occur.

Thus, the professional service provider should anticipate where mistakes are most likely to occur and have recovery measures are that are in place to maintain the trust of the client who experiences the mistake.

3.1.4 *Perishability*

Perishability of services means that they cannot be stored for later sale or use. Some doctors charge patients for missed appointments because the service existed only at that time and disappeared when the patient did not show up.

The perishability of services also has certain implications. One of these is that the service provider is basically selling performance. For example, although knowing that *your physician has performed one thousand open-heart surgeries is reassuring, what's* really essential is the physician's ability to safely perform yours. Another implication of perishability is the fluctuation of demand. When demand is steady, it may be really easy to perform on a consistent basis, when demand fluctuates wildly, it may become more difficult to perform / in the case of a physician, for example, it may be difficult to give every patient time and personal attention in the middle of a flu epidemic.

3.2 Customers concerns

Two of the major concerns for customers about services are the price and risks associated with the lack of information about the quality of service before its purchase (Zeithmal *et al*, 1996). In the construction industry, this causes problems in selecting service providers. One general approach is to offset the risks involved by relying on the reputation of the provider (Sapir & Winter, 1994). At the international level, this is assessed by the company's track record in similar projects. Reputation then becomes the non-price competitive edge. In some cases, companies offer their services to domestic clients overseas (Erramilli, 1990). These companies are known as 'client followers' - a relationship that is only possible when the customer and the provider of the service have formed a trust relationship - a quasi-contractual relationship, which can, in some cases, act as a barrier to trade for other competing companies and influence international competition in services (Sapir & Winter, 1994).

3.3 Types of services

As Figure 2 shows, services may be further divided into *product related services*, *equipment related services* and *people related services* (Assael, 1993). For the purposes of this dissertation the third category is the one to concentrate on, namely *people based services* and it employs unskilled labour, skilled personnel and professionals. It includes medical services, and consultants to name a few. Construction services are people based services that produce a product.

Marketing construction services is therefore a complex activity that can better be explained by the construction process itself. Pre-construction services of feasibility studies and design are purely professional services that are people based. Marketing such services requires customisation of the service (Bell, 1981; Sasser & Arbeit, 1978), selection and training of service personnel (Berry, 1981) to create a strong organisational image of a professional service as a competitive edge.

The construction process itself is a complex process that involves different service providers of varying levels of skills. Construction activities that involve the erection of the physical facility will therefore be marketed as product based services. Post construction services are product related services that are marketed in a similar manner to product-based services. For construction services, therefore, there is not likely to be one defined marketing strategy, but a variety depending on the type and nature of the services provided. A unique feature of the construction industry in its global context is the change of the location of production with each consumer (Sugimoto, 1990; Hall *et al*, 1998). As physical proximity between the users / consumers of the service and the providers of the service is a necessity in the services industry, the case for the construction industry is best explained by the trade theories concepts.

Services products can also be classified on a *search* versus *experience* basis (Nelson, 1970; Darbi and Karni, 1973), where *search based attributes* can be evaluated prior to purchase with *experience based services* being those that can only be evaluated after purchase and during consumption (Mitra *et al*, 1999).

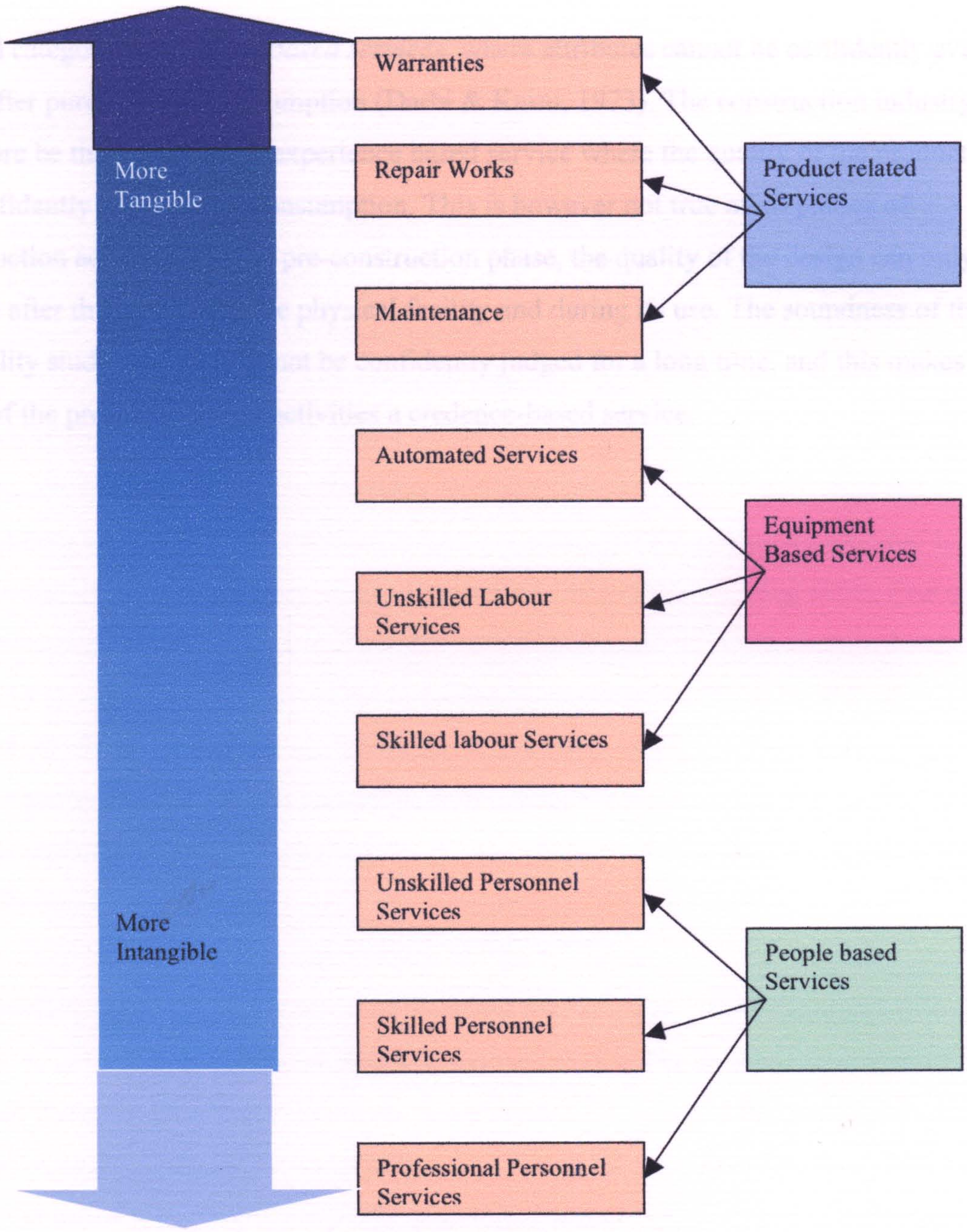

Figure 2: A Classification of Services (Source: Assael 1993)

A third category is *credence-based services*, where attributes cannot be confidently evaluated even after purchase and consumption (Darbi & Karni, 1973). The construction industry can therefore be thought of as an experience based service where the quality of the product can be confidently judged after consumption. This is however not true of all phases of construction activities. At the pre-construction phase, the quality of the design can only be judged after the erection of the physical facility and during its use. The soundness of the feasibility study however cannot be confidently judged for a long time, and this makes this stage of the pre-construction activities a credence-based service.

4. Marketing of Construction Services

4.1 Changes in the marketing

The ability of the construction industry to innovate and manage change has been widely debated over the years (Betts and Ofori, 1992; Gale and Fellows, 1990; Lansley, 1987). A whole range of factors within the environment of the construction industry has changed over the last 20 years in such a way that the combined effect has been for construction firms to move away from their traditional modes of operating to a more business-like approach (Barrett, 1993). In order to solve the many new and complex issues which confront management teams in the construction industry, Lansley (1987) suggested the need to develop and demonstrate a wide range of reasoning and problem-solving skills. One of the prime requirements, he opined, is to be able to realign limited physical, technical and human resources to meet rapid changes in the construction markets and the preferred procurement methods of clients (Lansley et al., 1979). Such flexibility requires highly innovative and creative problem-solving skills as well as organisational structures and managerial value systems which support and encourage the development of such skills (David, 1991; Eppink, 1975; Peters, 1988).

Change often requires an adjustment of roles and relationships within the organisation if demand is to be met, but although potential demand may not be as obvious as immediate demand, it may be stimulated. However, it requires skill to convert the potential to real demand. A logical approach is to identify a need (demand), evaluate the scale of the need and the likelihood of satisfying it at a profit, plan how demand can be satisfied, and implement the plan, i.e. marketing. Marketing is thus identified as a central function crossing all internal and external boundaries. Unfortunately, the construction industry, like many other service industries, faces the usual problems associated with the marketing of services, namely: intangibility; inseparability; perishability; and heterogeneity of services (Bell, 1981; Moore, 1984). The dilemma facing the enterprises in the construction industry is the question of what should be emphasised and how to decide on an organisation's marketing orientation. Consequently, marketing is less well developed in the industry as a whole and performed in most firms on an ad hoc basis (Morgan & Morgan, 1990).

Many authors on the marketing of construction services (Bell, 1981; Fisher, 1989; Hillebrandt & Cannon, 1990; Moore, 1984; Morgan & Morgan, 1990; Pearce, 1992) have argued that there are still a number of misconceptions about the appropriateness and benefits of adopting marketing as a management tool in construction enterprises. Hillebrandt and Cannon (1990) noted that contractors' major marketing efforts are not being directed towards seeking work in a particular market area or from a certain client or group of clients, but towards getting on the tender list for construction work for central government, local authorities and nationalised industries. Their marketing behaviour towards the public sector client is replicated with private clients. Thus there was no need for them to put any effort into sophisticated marketing since once on the tender list the dominant decision factor would be price.

4.2 Marketing in the construction industry

A review of literature has shown that there is no significant research interest in marketing in the UK construction industry prior to the 1970s. However, within the last two decades there have been various attempts at research in this area. Virtually all have concentrated on the essence of marketing in construction and the perception of the industry on its importance. Construction researchers have also grappled with the question as to exactly what constitutes marketing in construction.

For example, Bell (1981) examined and compared attitudes to, and the organisation of, marketing within construction firms within the UK. He thought at the outset of the research that marketing strategy could be developed based on the distinctive service industry features. However, the search for such features relevant to construction industry was not fruitful. Similarly, Hardy and Davies (1983) discovered that many firms exhibited an indifferent attitude to marketing. Fisher (1989) also commented on the unbalanced view of marketing and found that, to a surprisingly large number of firms, marketing appears to be synonymous with selling, business lunches and "double-glazing hype". Yet the science and business philosophy of marketing, he argued, is taught as a serious subject to the cream of business managers and other professionals in almost every other industry.

Morgan & Morgan (1990) concluded from a study of marketing communication in the UK construction industry that marketing is still a new phenomenon viewed with scepticism. Shearer (1990) highlighted the problem of conceptualising marketing in construction. That research also found a prevalence of the view that marketing in construction is in essence selling promises, because the client is normally being asked to buy something which does not exist. Pheng (1991) observed that marketing has attracted only little attention among construction contractors and professionals alike. Similarly, Morgan & Burnicle (1991) noted that the UK construction industry has been slow in adopting marketing principles. Many construction enterprises still often fail to realise that marketing entails more than just playing with few isolated promotional tools, such as distributing brochures, advertising, promotional videos, which they often employ without following a structured marketing plan formulated in line with the organisation's aims and objectives.

The conceptual difficulty is only a part of the wider debate as to what marketing is. For example, Namo & Fellows (1993) found a wide variety of definitions of marketing even among marketing professionals and supported their argument with two definitions by Kotler (1986) and Ohmae (1988). Kotler defines marketing in terms of human activity directed at satisfying needs and wants through exchange, while Ohmae saw it as discovering what customers want and orienting the firm to satisfy those wants. Payne (1988) views marketing as the responsiveness of an organisation to its market needs.

The construction industry is essentially a service industry (Arditi & Davis, 1988; Friedman, 1994; Hardy & Davies, 1983), and faces the same problems often encountered by other service industries, namely intangibility of services, inseparability, perishability, and heterogeneity. Generally, in the marketing of services, as in the construction industry, there are problems additional to those relating to the traditional marketing mixes, i.e. product, price, promotion and place (Fisher, 1989; Hardy & Davies, 1983). Langford & Fellows (1993) listed some of these problems as: uncertainties regarding the clients; the need for relevant experience; limited differentiation between services; limited knowledge of marketing & involvement of the consumer in production.

4.3 Implications for marketing strategy

The changes discussed in 4.1 & 4.2 exert pressure on an organisation to modify its strategies (goals and tactics) and its organisational structure. Competition in the construction industry has also increased considerably in recent years due to influences resulting from these changes. The UK Government's competitive policy sector seeks to influence industrial performance indirectly by creating a framework within which firms pursue their interest in accordance with market forces. For the public sector, which has always been classified as low quality, poorly managed and insensitive to delivery, government policy was introduced to either sell off services or contract out those services provided by those public bodies.

Strategic growth results from an awareness of the opportunities and needs central to the organisation and shape its future market strategy. A good understanding of the needs of the market arising from a greater attention to effective boundary regulation will lead to beneficial market segmentation and an inclination towards innovation, administratively as well as technically. Unfortunately, the UK construction industry is yet to achieve significant success in the planning and management of the marketing function.

Corporate strategy is described as a way of doing things, finding methods and favourable conditions for achieving objectives to impose on the marketplace, at the time and under the conditions of trade preferred by oneself (Yisa et al.,1995). Construction enterprises, however, tend to ignore marketing in their development and application of corporate strategy. As currently employed in construction companies, marketing is mainly tactical sales and advertising rather than being a strategic development of a client-oriented business (Corfe et al., 1991; Pearce, 1992). In several companies within the construction industry, marketing is still seen as an extension of, or part of the responsibilities of operations managers or other specialists rather than as an independent function (Hillebrandt & Cannon, 1990). Marketing as a service to enhance performance has only recently been introduced in a number of companies (Namo & Fellows, 1993) and it still appears to be relatively poorly integrated and organised and the practice varies considerably (Yisa et al., 1995). In most companies the marketing function is only located in the regions where there is the need to procure jobs to maintain a specific workload (Yisa et al., 1995).

4.4 Construction clients

The 1980s saw the beginning of rapid privatisation of government enterprises in the UK, allowing for greater competition. There has been an increasing rise in the number of private and commercial developers and housing associations. Further to this, many public bodies like the NHS, prison services and schools are increasingly acquiring trust status, as a result of which they are now becoming self-governing, with very little central control. Their new developments are designed along private-sector lines. For such bodies, emphasis is placed on speed, value-based services and cost-time-quality performance for a particular project and there are clear signs that these clients are becoming increasingly involved in building processes; relationships with contractors appear to be moving towards more of partnering and other forms of strategic alliance (Langford & Fellows, 1993).

5. Methodology

5.1 Introduction

Every research process should involve a degree of philosophical retrospection and as this process involves at every step making choices, these should have a philosophical underpinning. This chapter will use as a template (see figure 3) the research process 'onion' model suggested by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2003) and will start with a description of the understanding of the philosophical issues on which the research design is based. It will be followed by a discussion on the different approaches and strategies to the research and will show the logical step-by-step approach to the choices made in the data collection and analysis methods used. Throughout it will discuss the various problems related to the primary and secondary research process and the solutions adopted.

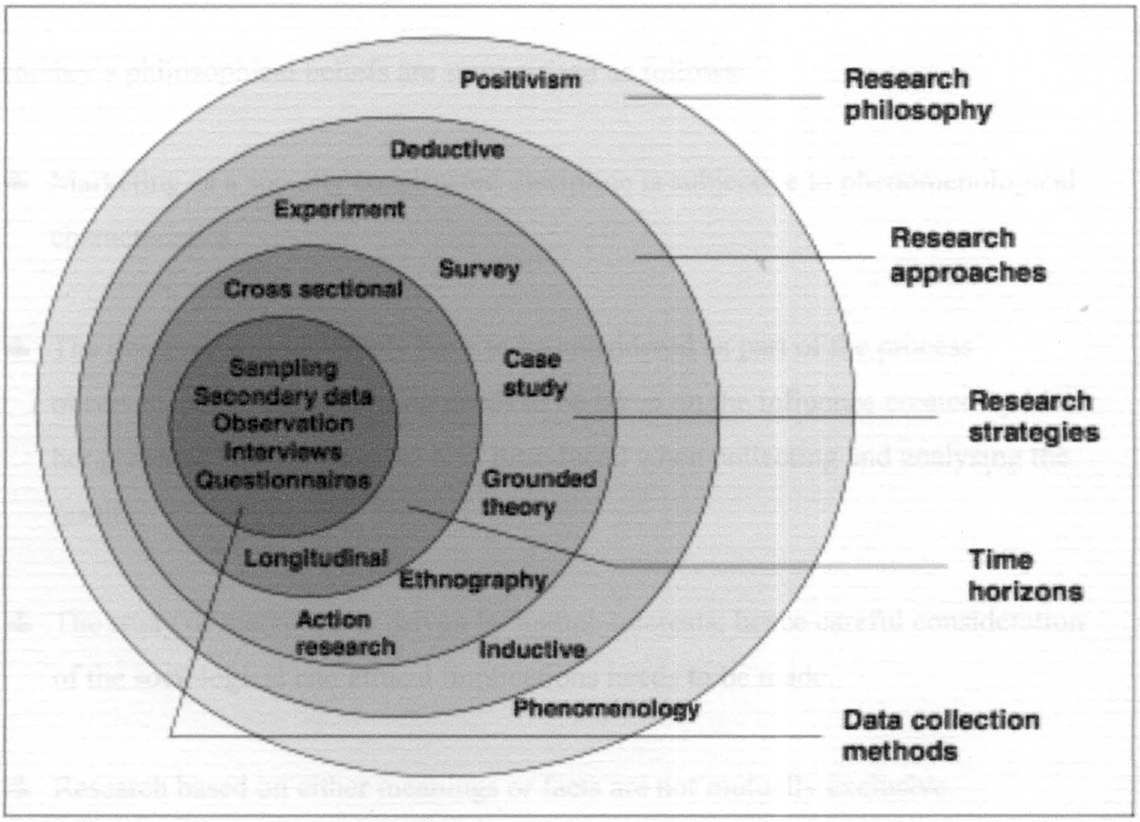

Figure 3 The Research Process 'onion' source: Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A., (2003).

5.2 The Research Philosophy

A phenomenological approach has been selected for this research. Whilst other methods could be suitable, these have been discounted for various reasons such as the time available to complete the research. This approach has been adopted by attempting to understand what is happening with regards to the marketing mix, how and why. The importance of the knowledge of philosophy in the research design process is helping the researcher to clarify not only what pieces of information need to be collected and from where, but which designs will work and why. Along with many other researchers and philosophers, Carson et al (2001) argue the purpose of the philosophical aspect of research in the following terms,

"A research position will have implications for what, how and why research is carried out. Consideration of the philosophy of research helps to contribute a deeper and wider perspective of research so that our own specific research projects can have a clearer purpose within the wider context".

The researcher's philosophical beliefs are summarised as follows:

- Marketing as a socially constructed discipline is subjective to phenomenological characteristics.

- The observer will inevitably have to be considered as part of the process observed, hence consideration needs to be taken on the influence created by his or her presence and the possible bias introduced when collecting and analysing the results.

- The study of marketing is driven by human interests; hence careful consideration of the sociological and ethical implications needs to be made.

- Research based on either meanings or facts are not mutually exclusive.

- The process of understanding what is happening can and should include a look for causality and fundamental laws.

- The mental exercise of reducing phenomena into their simplest components can be beneficial in the process of understanding the big picture.

- The formulation and testing of hypotheses should be used in the process of challenging theoretical constructs.

- Multiple research methods, such as triangulation should be used in order to establish different views of the phenomena and infuse confidence in the research process.

In order to answer these questions and to achieve the aims, by adopting a phenomenological philosophy a questionnaire strategy was implemented. The instructions accompanying the questionnaires stressed the relatively small demand that completing the questionnaire would make upon respondents. The instructions also indicated the purpose of the survey; promised feedback to contributing organisations and guaranteed anonymity in the published results. Respondents were provided with the questionnaire and due to the large difference in location i.e. various locations within the UK and Brisbane Australia, a private e-mail address was supplied for the return of their completed questionnaire. The covering letter requested that the completed questionnaires be returned within three weeks of the despatch of the survey.

5.3 Choosing the Research Approach

This research is based on a combined approach to research. Use was made of some techniques with a bias to deduction (testing theory) as well as induction (building theory approaches). It is believed that for this research project a combination of approaches will be advantageous. Therefore the deductive approach has been used when there was a need for clear understanding of the underlying theory at the beginning of research as opposed to the inductive approach where the data is collected first and theory is developed following data analysis. The researcher felt that elements of the inductive approach could be incorporated, such as trying to get the feel of what was going on, especially in the exploratory phase, in order to understand better the nature of the problem. Nevertheless, commencing the research work from a theoretical perspective was deemed to provide advantages for the study of the marketing discipline within the professional context.

This led also to using a qualitative research study which utilised the characteristics of a holistic and naturalistic approach as advocated by Patton (1980) seeking to establish the opinions of the research population (Naoum, 2003). Time, finance and physical distance precluded the use of interview data collection and therefore an e-mail questionnaire survey was adopted as a means of collecting information.

An iterative approach to the research process has also been adopted and a more flexible research structure will allow for changes in emphasis as the research progresses. From the starting point, early initial observations, underpinned by the literature review, have lead to a theoretical framework and a first set of assumptions. These have been tested in the field via the analysis of data collected. An adjustment of the theoretical model and a new refined set of assumptions have been necessary. This process has been repeated until the stage was reached where no more relevant benefits can be derived from it. Within the present research, the process of refinement of the theoretical model has been done through each additional round of data collection and analysis from each of the firm visited and studied. By the time the participants had been visited, analysed and discussed, it was felt that no more relevant benefits could be drawn from continuing in researching additional firms as the results obtained seemed to be rich in significance for the scope of this study. Below (figure 4) is a diagrammatic representation of an iterative approach.

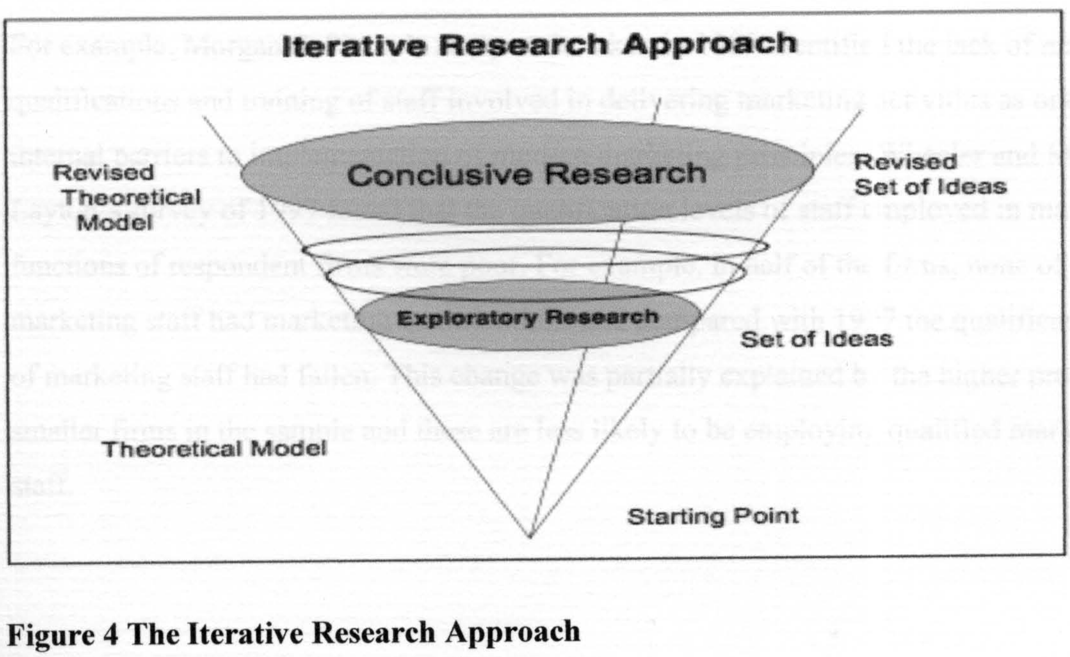

Figure 4 The Iterative Research Approach

There are a number of important characteristics to the deductive approach, which mirror the positivistic principles. Firstly, the need to find causal relationships between variables. Secondly, the need for a rather structured methodology to facilitate replication, which ensures validity and reliability of the results. Finally, operationalisation and generalisation imply the need for using quantitative research using samples of a sufficient size. This is not necessarily the case, as the present research has demonstrated that the qualitative survey of the twenty professional service firms yielded significant results. Yin (1994) suggests that if the choice has been made to use existing theories to formulate research questions and objectives, then the same theoretical propositions should be used to build a framework to organise the data collection and direct the data analysis.

5.4 The Importance of Secondary Data

Secondary data, which is data collected for purposes other than the research at hand, can provide useful comparative and contextual information in the exploratory phase of the research. It was found to be a good starting point for the research, providing leads for defining the assumptions and in the structuring of the relationships between variables. Another important advantage of using secondary data is that it can provide the longitudinal element to a time-limited research. Historical data can be useful in order to understand the evolution of marketing practices within professional firms.

For example, Morgan & Piercy's study undertaken in 1989 identified the lack of marketing qualifications and training of staff involved in delivering marketing activities as one of the internal barriers to implementation of modern marketing principles. Wheeler and McCallum Layton's survey of 1999 found that the qualification levels of staff employed in marketing functions of respondent firms were poor. For example, in half of the firms, none of the marketing staff had marketing qualifications and compared with 1997 the qualification levels of marketing staff had fallen. This change was partially explained by the higher proportion of smaller firms in the sample and these are less likely to be employing qualified marketing staff.

5.5 Qualitative Data Collection

Van Maanen (1979) defines qualitative methods as, "...an array of interpretative techniques which seek to describe, decode, translate and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world". Data collection techniques associated with qualitative methods are interviews, observation and diary methods. Qualitative data is typically open-ended and related to the temporal and special domain. This is quite relevant to the research of managerial problems as they usually are the unfolding of a process rather than structure. The aim of qualitative studies according to Carson et al (2001) is to gain understanding of a situation. They contend that, "In-depth understanding is based on researcher immersion in the phenomena to be studied, gathering data which provide a detailed description of events, situations and interaction between people and things, providing depth and detail (Patton 1980).

It is concerned with things that really happen in organisations as researchers and people experience them". Qualitative research has been accused of being non generalisable. Although qualitative research tends to be either descriptive or comparative, it does not mean that it can't be generalised. According to Johnson and Harris (2002) generalisability can be associated with data or theory, "In the former, researchers should be able to demonstrate that their findings will be replicable in all similar cases. With theory generalisability, the ideas and theoretical contributions reached at the end of the work are generalisable to future work that can advance progress already made. Quantitative research can have both data and theory generalisability, whereas qualitative research usually has just the latter". This has been the approach adopted for the present research to be able to contribute to theory generalisability through the use of qualitative research.

5.6 Semi-structured Interviews

Johnson and Harris (2002) mention that the most widespread methods of qualitative data collection are structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviewing, non-participant observation, company documents written or not purposely written for the research. The data collected through these methods, from either a document, a transcript or researcher's notes, in its rawest form is to be found as words.

The adoption of any particular data collection method is dependent on the research objectives. As the present research aims to clarify the 7P`s used by building surveyors, the use of semi-structured interviews has been deemed highly appropriate. Such a method provided a good understanding of the respondents' world and allowed for a step-by-step logic of situations to be clarified. In the process of deciding the most appropriate method an exploration of decision factors has been considered. Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe (1991) mention that successful data collection is dependent on a number of issues:

a). *Degree of structure*. This has been dictated by the research objectives and by the degree of difficulty of access to the organisations or persons to be interviewed. If access is fraught with difficulty, then it is preferably to have a rather structured topic guide which may allow for deviation from the sequence but which will ensure that all questions have been covered. In this research, access to interviewees has been relatively easy, allowing for a semi-structured approach of interviewing.

b). *Interviewing skills*. It is an important element and the success of the data collection project relies on it. Generally, the interviewer needs to be able to distinguish between what is relevant and what not, to be sensitive to certain issues especially related to the internal politics, to have listening skills and finally be able to read non-verbal messages. Sensitivity to delicate issues can be achieved by an in-depth knowledge of the company and the industry. It was therefore essential to be well prepared in advance of an interview and an exploratory phase that acted as a dry run was felt important.

c). *Obtaining trust*. The same comment as to the need for sensitivity applies here. Trust can be achieved quicker if the interviewee can see the relevance of the project and if there is a reciprocal interest in the outcome of the research. Overall an excellent level of trust has been established during the interviewing process proven by the generosity shown by almost all interviewees with their time, supporting material, further discussions post interviews, further referrals and their tremendous hospitality accorded to the writer.

d). *Interview bias*. It is an unavoidable part of the research process, as the researcher even involuntarily will project his own opinions. Certain techniques such as probing have been used to minimise the level of bias.

e). *Ethical issues*. These are again related to the 'micro-politics' of the organisation and the possible conflicts of interests experienced by the interviewees. The issue of confidentiality and the way data is processed and results utilised have been made clear at the outset.

To support the research strategy the following data collection methods were employed:

Semi-structured interviews were undertaken with two levels of management. This provided an appropriate real-life context where the contemporary phenomenon of integrated internal communications could be studied (Yin, 2003). The purpose of these interviews was to gather data relating to the research question, this data provided essential direction for the design of the questionnaire. This is crucial for this research as there is minimal time available for piloting of the questionnaire. It also provided an opportunity to probe answers and encourage the interviewee to elaborate or build on a relevant points as well as commenting on points of relevance not previously considered. This approach also helped to identify any causal relationships exist between variable data. Furthermore, due to my previous work experience within Butler and Young Group, access to people and sensitive information not in the public domain was made easier.

Gummesson (1991) and Johns (2001) argue that different roles played by the researcher within the research process can produce sound contextualisation of the research phenomenon. Hence, the observational material, together with the interviews, forms an important part of the data. A decision was made to send the list of questions in advance of the actual interview in order to establish credibility with the interviewee. It demonstrated the level of knowledge of the topic by the researcher.

Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2000) support this approach, "Providing participants with a list of the interview themes before the event, where this is appropriate, should help this aim and also promote validity and reliability through enabling the interviewee to consider the information being requested and allowing them the opportunity to assemble supporting organisational documentation from their files. We can testify to this approach and the value in allowing participants to prepare themselves for the discussion in which they are to engage".

It was also necessary to conduct some of these interviews by telephone due to the geography involved i.e. Brisbane Australia to Croydon England. Whilst this posed risks, such as the establishing of personal contact and rapport, interpreting non-verbal signals and control of the interview, it is felt this approach is suitable and acceptable in these circumstances. The people identified to be interviewed included, one director and one manager. These interviews took place between 5th to 12th April 2007.The data obtained from these semi-structured interviews was to be used to inform the design of the questionnaire. Comments from these interviews are shown in appendix 10.1

5.7 Questionnaire

This questionnaire was designed using best practice methods (Moser & Kalton, 2002 Robson, 2002) and comprised eight sections. Prior to the first section is a brief but important introduction to the definition of the 7 P`s and a summary of them. The first section required the respondents to provide details about their employment, professional background, organisation, etc. Following this the remaining sections dealt with each of the 7P`s in turn. The questionnaire was piloted with the interviewees from the semi-structured interviews to ensure their relevance and their reliability (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2003). Many useful texts and guides to designing the questionnaires were researched when carrying out my research, such as Newell (1993), Burns (2000), Bloom & Fischer (1982) and Kidder & Judd (1986). The questionnaire was distributed on 19th March 2007 to twenty participants within various organisations in order to ensure that a representative sample of all type of organisation across both UK and Australia were accounted for. A copy of the questionnaire can be seen in appendix 10.2.

Whilst most of the research strategies could be successfully employed in this research it has again been necessary to consider the constraints applicable to the project. The two key constraints being time and access to the required participants. The chosen strategy is therefore the use of a questionnaire approach.

The use of questionnaires were used as they can be seen as an advantage when carrying out research due to the following:

Questionnaires are very cost effective when compared to face-to-face interviews, mostly because of the costs associated with travel time (Bachrack & Scoble, 1967; Benson, 1946; Hochstim & Athanasopoulos, 1970; Moser & Kalton, 1971; Seitz, 1944). This is especially true for studies involving large sample sizes and large geographic areas as in this particular case (Clausen & Ford, 1947; Goode & Hatt, 1962; Ruckmick, 1930). Written questionnaires become even more cost effective as the number of research questions increases.

Questionnaires are easy to analyse. Data entry and tabulation for nearly surveys can be easily done with computer software packages. Questionnaires are familiar to most people. Nearly everyone has had some experience completing questionnaires and they generally do not make people apprehensive. They also assist to reduce bias. There is uniform question presentation and no middleman bias.

The researchers own opinions will not influence the respondent to answer questions in a certain manner. There are no verbal or visual clues to influence the respondent. They are also are less intrusive than telephone or face-to-face surveys. When a respondent receives a questionnaire in the mail, he is free to complete the questionnaire on his own timetable (Cahalan, 1951; Jahoda, et al., 1962).

However like all forms of research there are some disadvantages, which have to be taken into account, namely:

Possibility of low response rates. Low response is the curse of statistical analysis (Benson, 1946; Phillips, 1941; Robinson, 1952). It can dramatically lower our confidence in the results. Response rates vary widely from one questionnaire to another (10% - 90%) however, well-designed studies consistently produce high response rates.

Inability to probe responses - questionnaires are structured instruments. They allow little flexibility to the respondent with respect to response format. In essence, they often lose the "flavour of the response" (i.e., respondents often want to qualify their answers, Walonick, 1993). By allowing frequent space for comments, the researcher can partially overcome this disadvantage. Comments are among the most helpful of all the information on the questionnaire and they usually provide insightful information that would have otherwise been lost.

A questionnaire requesting factual information will probably not be affected by the lack of personal contact. A questionnaire probing sensitive issues or attitudes may be severely affected. When returned questionnaires arrive in the mail, it's natural to assume that the respondent is the same person you sent the questionnaire to. This may not actually be the case. Many times business questionnaires get handed to other employees for completion (Clausen & Ford, 1947; Franzen & Lazersfeld, 1945; Moser & Kalton, 1971; Scott, 1961).

Finally, questionnaires are simply not suited for some people. For example, a written survey to a group of poorly educated people might not work because of reading skill problems. More frequently, people are turned off by written questionnaires because of misuse.

The questionnaire was piloted as recommended by Saunders et al:

"..to refine the questionnaire so that respondents will have no problem in answering the questions and there will be no problems in recording the data." Saunders *et al* (2003). Saunders *et al* go on to say that piloting helps ensure validity and reliability. Despite stretching timescales it was therefore essential to pilot the questionnaire.

This will also allow triangulation of the data collected that will serve to support the validity of the data (which is especially important given the questionnaire has never been previously used and therefore is unproven). Such triangulation of data from discrete data sets improves the ability to draw conclusions from studies (Yin, 1989) and allows recommendations for managers to be made with greater clarity and confidence (Scandura and Williams, 2000).

5.8 Ethical Issues – Anonymity and Confidentiality

Ethical issues connected with the particular data collection methods and the research proposal will be well thought-out and appropriate measures taken to ensure compliance with Codes of Ethics. Also ethical issues at all stages of the research have been assessed and control measures set up to seek to control these issues. This is of particular importance with regards to qualitative research and is likely to lead to a greater number of ethical concerns. An anonymous study is one in which nobody (not even the researcher) can identify who provided data (Berdie, Anderson, Niebuhr, 1986).

Some studies have shown that response rate is affected by the anonymity / confidentiality policy of a study (Jones, 1979; Dickson et al., 1977; Epperson & Peck, 1977). Klein, Maher, and Dunnington (1967) reported that responses became more distorted when subjects felt threatened that their identities would become known. Others have found that anonymity / confidentiality issues do not affect response rates or responses (Butler, 1973; Fuller, 1974; Futrell & Swan, 1977; Skinner & Childers, 1980; Watkins, 1978; Wildman, 1977). One researcher reported that the lack of anonymity actually increased response (Fuller, 1974).

It is difficult to conduct an anonymous questionnaire through the mail because of the need to follow-up on non-responders. The only way to do a follow-up is to mail another survey or reminder postcard to the entire sample – however due to time constraints this is not possible. However, it is possible to guarantee confidentiality, where those conducting the study promise not to reveal the information to anyone as in this particular case.

5.9 Sampling

It is incumbent on me as the researcher to clearly define the target population. There are no strict rules to follow and therefore I must rely on logic and judgment. The population is defined in keeping with the objectives of the study.

Usually, sample sizes are much smaller in qualitative than in quantitative research and, as mentioned by Johnson and Harris (2002), there are no rules as to how many is enough. The iterative process described previously determined the number of firms studied.

It was felt that the amount of data collected from the twenty participants fulfilled the research objectives within the limitations of time placed upon this dissertation. Sometimes, the entire population will be sufficiently small, however this is not the case here.

For practical reasons a combination of purposive or judgmental sampling and convenience sampling has been used. Purposive sampling enabled me to make a judgmental decision in the selection process, whereas convenience sampling involves selecting those organisations that are easiest to access. The drawback in the latter case is the possible introduction of bias, but this can be controlled through the use of triangulation, which is the use of different data collection methods within one study in order to maximise the reliability and validity of the data.

There was apprehension at the start of the present research that difficulties will be encountered in gaining access to firms and interviewees. This has proved unfounded. A systematic approach in contacting firms through a variety of methods has brought a steady stream of potential candidates. The methods used were:

- E-mailing
- Personal contacts and networking

Therefore a small, but carefully chosen sample was used to represent the population. The sample reflects the characteristics of the population from which it is drawn. The sampling methods chosen was classified as non-probability sampling. In non-probability sampling, members are selected from the population in some non-random manner. In this case judgment sampling was chosen. As the researcher I have selected the sample based my experience within the construction industry and also by using my professional judgment.

Sampling techniques as defined by Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2000), "...provide a range of methods enabling to reduce the amount of data collected, by considering data from a sub-group rather than all possible cases". Sampling decisions are also influenced by the choice between cross-sectional and longitudinal designs. Cross-sectional designs focus on a wide number of organisations or situations studied over a short period of time. Longitudinal designs focus on a small number of organisations studied over an extended period of time.

A cross-sectional approach has also been adopted for the research, as it was considered appropriate for the study of building surveying firms across the spectrum, as this might provide an answer to variations in the rate of adoption of marketing within these firms. Also a choice regarding the size of the organisations as well as a selection of the people to be interviewed was carefully made.

Based on early initial observation, it was expected that there would be substantial variations in the rate of acceptance and adoption of marketing in building surveying firms based on their size and geographical location. The assumption was that larger firms have been subjected to stronger contingency pressures, hence, will have a better understanding of marketing and would practice a wider range of marketing activities. Therefore it was important to select an as wide as possible range of firms across the size spectrum. The final sample of firms is shown in Appendix 10.4.

When using this method, I was confident that the chosen sample is truly representative of the entire population. As shown in this list shows the various levels of personnel I have issued the questionnaire to and therefore I have used my experience both within Butler & Young and in the construction industry in order to gain a wide scope of differing levels of staff in order to receive cross sectional answers and views.

The sample size was a difficult decision for me to make; as Fink (1995b) points out the larger the size the more work required to collate and analyse the response, however it is essential the sample is statistically significant. The total response rate was 60% (there were no ineligible or unreachable respondents). Given the time and geographical distance as well as the time difference (10 hrs) it was not possible for me to send follow-up mailings. All returned questionnaires were fully completed, thereby eliminating the possibility of 'item non-response bias' discussed by Fink (1995b).

5.10 Cover Letter

The cover letter is an essential part of the survey. To a large degree, the cover letter will affect whether or not the respondent completes the questionnaire. It is important to maintain a friendly tone and keep it as short as possible (Goode & Hatt, 1962). The importance of the cover letter should not be underestimated. It provides an opportunity to persuade the respondent to complete the survey.

There are no definitive answers whether or not to personalise cover letters (i.e. the respondents name appears on the cover letter). Some researchers (Andreasen, 1970; Houston & Jefferson, 1975) have found that personalised cover letters can be detrimental to response when anonymity or confidentiality are important to the respondent. The literature regarding personalisation are mixed. Some researchers have found that personalised cover letters with hand-written signatures helped response rates (Labrecque, 1978). Other investigators, however, have reported that personalisation has no effect on response. I have therefore decided to personalise each letter – to which I addressed the letter to them directly and included a hand written signature although some were e-mailed / scanned into the computer. A copy of this letter is shown in appendix 10.4. I also sent reminder e-mails to participants who had not returned them prior to the submission date in order to increase response (Walonick, 1993):

- Describe why the study is being done (briefly) and identify the sponsors.
- Mention the incentive (A good incentive is a copy of the results).
- Describe your "confidentiality / anonymity" policy.
- Give the name and phone number of someone they can call with questions.

To conclude, the cover letter also stated a cut-off date for the return of the questionnaire of 6th April 2007. Several researchers have examined the effect of giving subjects a deadline for responding (Duncan, 1979; Erdos, 1957; Ferriss, 1951; Jones & Lang, 1980; Jones & Linda, 1978; Nevin & Ford, 1976; Houston & Nevin, 1977; Vocino, 1977).

6. Marketing Mix

6.1 Introduction

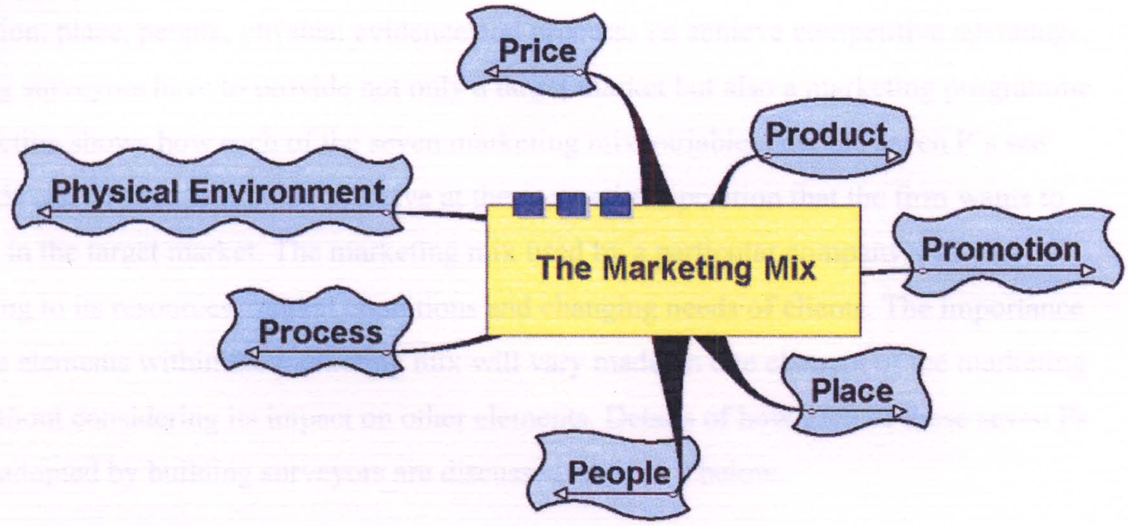

Figure 5 The Marketing Mix 7 Ps

Kotler & Armstrong (1993) argue that the marketing mix is "a set of controllable variable that the firm blends to produce the response its wants in the target market". Brownlie & Saren (1991) describes the marketing mix as how the enterprise offers its products and services to its target market. It can be concluded that the overall aim or objective of the 7P`s model is to allow the organisation to build and sustain a competitive advantage in the market place (Collier 1991). The 7P`s are generally used in marketing strategy formulation because the model is supposed or perceived to be flexible enough and can be integrated in different combinations to fulfil the above- mentioned objective.

The tools we use to build competitive advantage are issues relating to applying the marketing concept, and in particular various factors associated with the 7 Ps - in a profitable way. This idea of matching the expectations and needs of one party to the exchange process to the services provided by building surveyors is what marketing is all about. One of the challenges faced by all building surveyors is how to design its service to satisfy its customer needs.

A framework has been developed and used for a number of years which can help managers to consider all relevant factors when designing their services. This is commonly known as "the marketing mix" and was developed by Borden (1965) and McCarthy (1960). The extended marketing mix for services consists of seven P`s. These are the product, price, promotion, place, people, physical evidence and process. To achieve competitive advantage, building surveyors have to provide not only a target market but also a marketing programme. This section shows how each of the seven marketing mix variables (i.e. the seven P`s see Figure 5) can be used as a guide to arrive at the competitive position that the firm wants to occupy in the target market. The marketing mix used by a particular company will vary according to its resources, market conditions and changing needs of clients. The importance of some elements within the marketing mix will vary made on one element of the marketing mix without considering its impact on other elements. Details of how each of these seven Ps can be adopted by building surveyors are discussed in table 2 below.

In services marketing, all parts of the mix are normally under the direct control of the service providers (see Figure 6); i.e. services are less frequently distributed through intermediaries. Some services are, however, distributed through intermediaries (for example package holidays, and insurance, etc.). This is most likely to occur where a standardised, pre-packaged service can be offered. Hence, where service delivery can be standardised and the quality of service easily controlled and monitored, services marketing resembles goods marketing. In fact, service marketers should be actively seeking to standardise their services or "industrialise" services as Levitt (1976) puts it.

The marketing mix concept has two important benefits. First, it is an important tool used to enable one to see that the marketing manager's job is, in a large part, a matter of trading off the benefits of one's competitive strengths in the marketing mix against the benefits of others. An example of this can be seen by looking at the typical medium-sized contractors. Contractual claims may be demanded by more junior line management, who are being judged personally on their performance on the construction project where profitability is low. Senior managers, who are usually the marketers, on the other hand, may be more concerned with the bad effect on the company's image and reputation because too many claims are being made.

As another example, the marketer may be able to refine his service characteristics and thereby strengthen his market position without having to resort to increasing his promotional budget or to cutting back on the tender sum. As can be seen in the case of established Japanese and Korean contractors, they have through the decade proven too many developers that they are able to handle mega-sized projects.

The second benefit of the marketing mix is that it helps to reveal another dimension of the marketing manager's job. All managers have to allocate available resources among various demands, and the marketing manager will in turn allocate these available resources among the various competitive devices of the marketing mix. In doing so, this will help to instil the marketing philosophy in the organisation.

Marketing management in the construction industry (Low, 1992) will face the same kind of problems as the manufacturing sector, i.e. in client analysis and analysis of the service, distribution, promotion and pricing. In view of this and the desire to deal only with the fundamental variables found in the broad framework of any marketing plans and strategies, this section will reduce all these variables to just the four P`s.

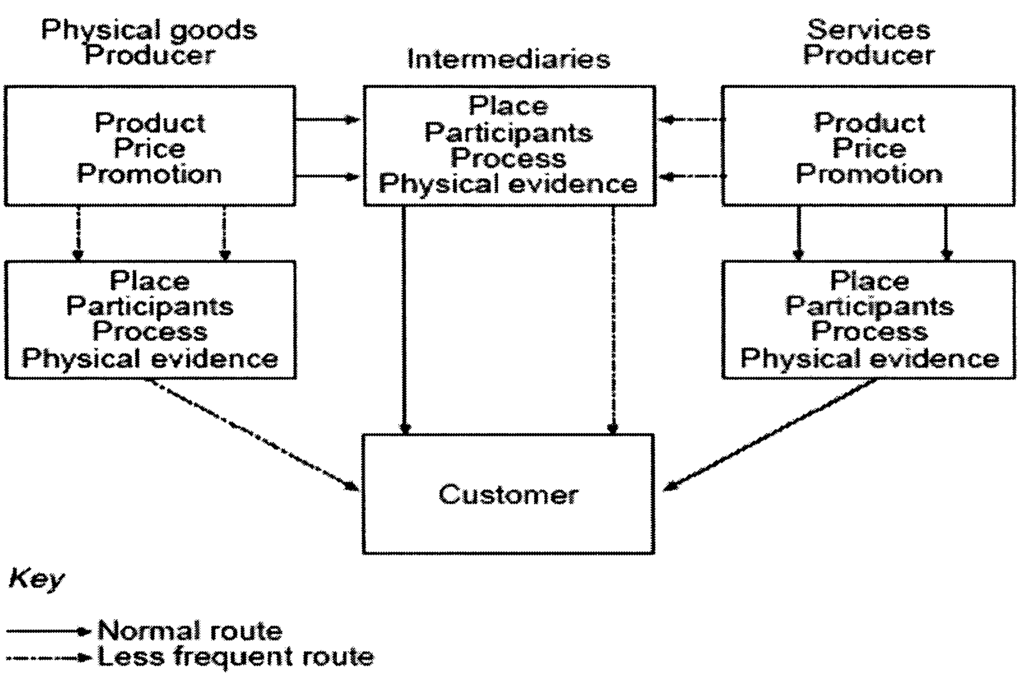

Figure 6 The Extended Marketing Mix and the Relationship Between Producers and Intermediaries in Goods and Services Marketing

Product	Price	Place	Promotion	Participants	Physical evidence	Process
Traditional						
Quality Features and options Style Brand name Packaging Product line Warranty Service level Other services	Level Discounts and allowances Payment terms	Distribution channels Distribution coverage Outlet locations Sales territories Inventory levels and locations Transport carriers	Advertising Personal selling Sales promotion Publicity			
Source: Kotler (1976)						
Modified and expanded for services						
Quality Brand name Service line Warranty Capabilities Facilitating goods Tangible clues Price Personnel Physical environment Process of service delivery	Level Discounts and allowances Payment terms Customer's own perceived value Quality/price interaction Differentiation	Location Accessibility Distribution channels Distribution coverage	Advertising Personal selling Sales promotion Publicity Personnel Physical environment Facilitating goods Tangible clues Process of service delivery	Personnel: Training Discretion Commitment Incentives Appearence Interpersonal behaviour Attitudes Other customers': Behaviour Degree of involvement, Customer/customer contact	Environment: Furnishings Colour Layout Noise level Facilitating goods Tangible clues	Policies Procedures Mechanization Employee discretion Customer involvement Customer direction Flow of activities
Source: Booms and Bitner (1981)						

Table 2 The Marketing Mix

6.1.1 Product

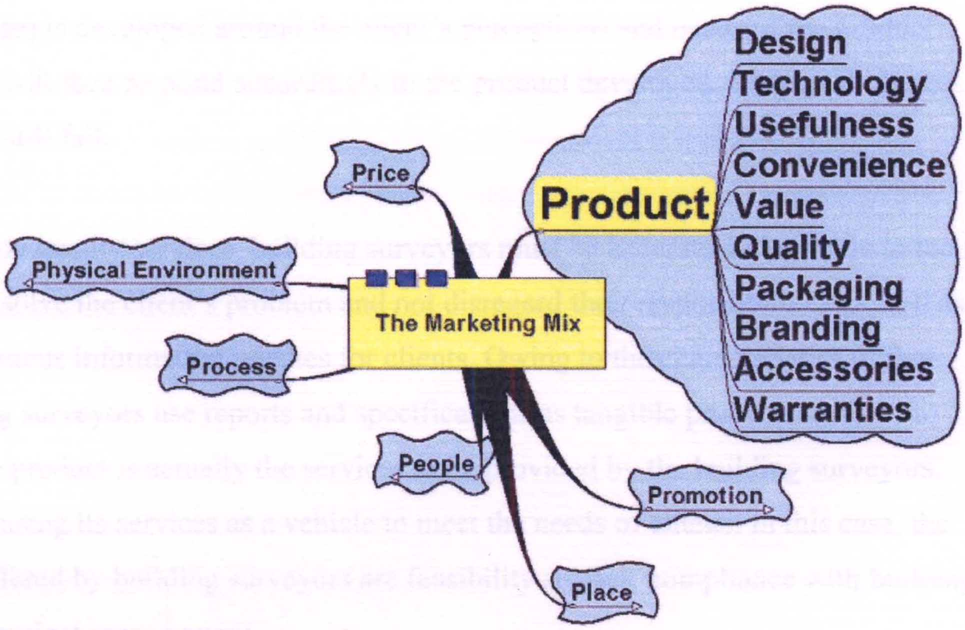

Figure 7 Marketing Mix Product

The current trend in the construction industry is moving away from quantity to quality, forcing contractors to upgrade the quality and sophistication of their service, be it a civil engineering project, construction of an intelligent building or normal conventional construction (Hasegawa, 1988). Hence, marketing-oriented contractors will be concerned with the job of developing construction services to satisfy the ever-changing and intense competitive environment in the construction industry. They will be concerned with developing the right service package, i.e. the way or skill with which the service or product is put together to enable the client to understand readily what he is buying.

A definition for product offered by Kotler (1984) suggests that it:

"...is anything that can be offered to a market for attention, acquisition, use or consumption; it includes physical objects, services, personalities, places, organisation services and ideas".

It is often thought that the largest profits will go to businesses which devotedly follow a policy of product superiority since consumers buy the product's benefits rather than its advertisements, price or even the ease of obtaining it. Product is therefore the main "weapon" used to "wage a war" in the business world.

Having said that, Western marketing gurus believe that this product variable (or construction service in this case) is developed around the client's perceptions and needs of the product and all other P`s will then respond accordingly to the product developed. Despite all these efforts, products still fail.

In order to provide quality services, building surveyors must be accurate and reliable in their work, be able to solve the client's problem and not disregard their responsibilities as well as to provide continuous information updates for clients. Owing to the characteristics of their services, building surveyors use reports and specifications as tangible products to show to their clients. The product is actually the services to be provided by the building surveyors. The company is using its services as a vehicle to meet the needs of clients. In this case, the basic services offered by building surveyors are feasibility studies, compliance with building regulations and project management.

It is also important to distinguish between what the service organisation offers and what benefits consumers derive from these offers. The quality and quantity of the service are of fundamental importance. They will affect the volume of demand for that service and the position of the company compared to its competitors. In order to, for example, deliver quality service, the company has to look into the accuracy and reliability of reports / comments given by building surveyors in initial stages of design. The style of presenting these figures to clients is also of importance.

To deliver quantity, the company has to look into the volume, timing and flow of the services it provides. Meeting deadlines is important because a delay will cost the client money. Clients will inevitably be worried when they get no responses from their building surveyors, especially when the deadline for a project is near. They will feel that their building surveyors are not taking their jobs seriously.

Building surveyors can be innovative by building competitive advantage into the physical service, quality, packaging, offering more extensive guarantees or warranty, offer more comprehensive service, stronger brand by ensuring consistent quality, upgrading of services, and to offer more features / benefits with its services. Machado suggests building service differential by getting closer to customers, giving personal attention, excellent service, be flexible and able to respond immediately, provide consistently high quality (check service items i.e. reports, etc. personally before delivery), be innovative in market place, have good location - be near your customers.

6.1.2 Price

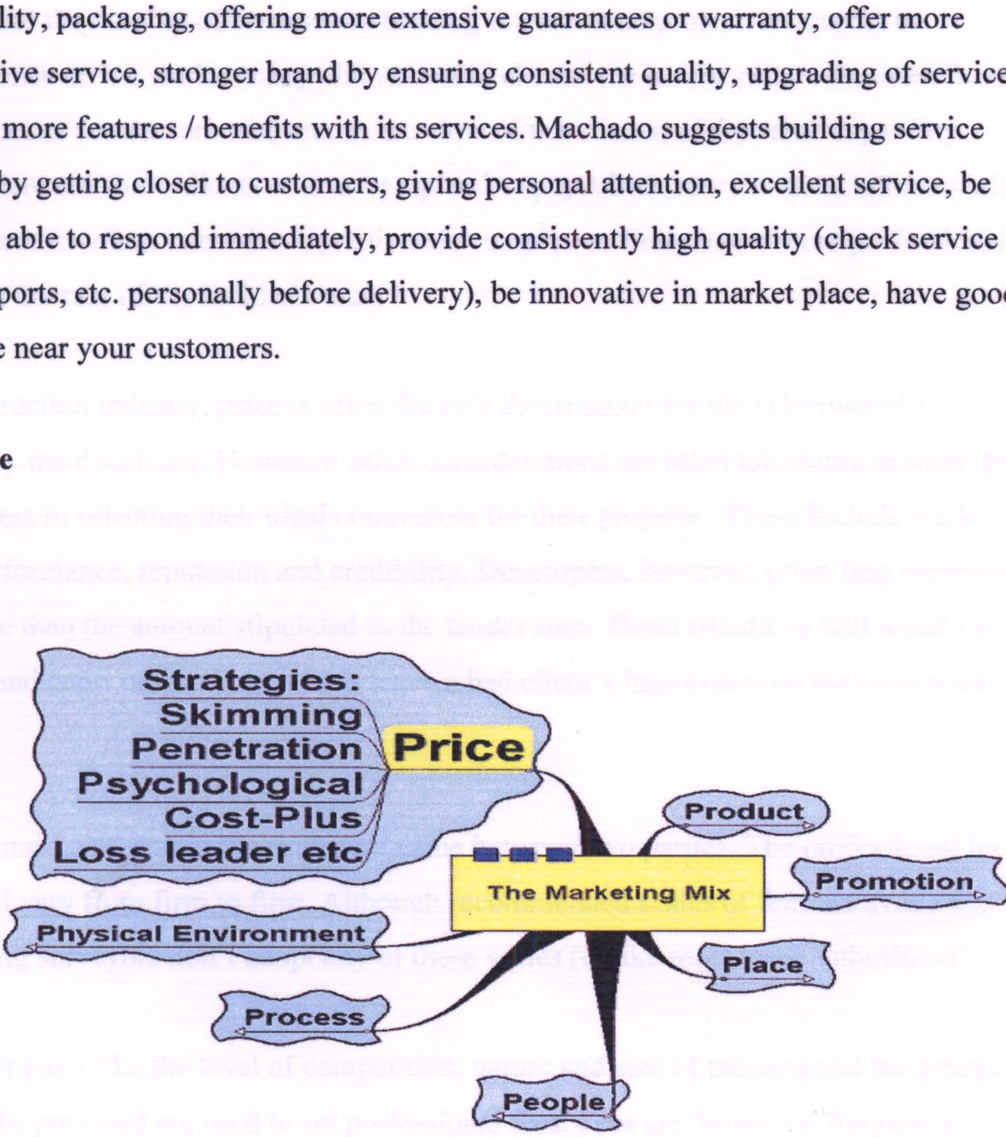

Figure 8 Marketing Mix Price

Price is the only variable in the marketing mix that must be set in relation to the other three P`s. The price of a construction service is in the form of a contract sum put forward during the tender stage. The tender sum is usually derived from the following considerations:

- fixed overheads: i.e. head office's expenditure and salaries.
- indirect overheads: i.e. preliminaries such as site office, site staff & plant.
- direct cost of constructing the project.
- profit margin.
- risks and uncertainties.

In the construction industry, the tender price is frequently very much dependent on market conditions and the number of contractors bidding for the same project. In respect of procuring construction works, many clients would choose the lowest price submitted from the list of chosen contractors who are, in the view of the clients, of the same capability. However, there are some clients who are prepared to pay a little more to get a higher quality of finishes, construction know-how, predictable completion times and a more professional approach on the part of the builder's team.

In the construction industry, price is often the sole determinant for the selection of a contractor by the developer. However, other considerations are often taken into account by the developers in selecting their ideal contractors for their projects. These include track records, performance, reputation and credibility. Developers, however, often find themselves paying more than the amount stipulated in the tender sum. These situations will result in arbitration and court proceedings which leave a bad client's impression on the contractor concerned.

Price is the means of setting the exchange value between two parties. The professional fees charged will vary from firm to firm. Although recommended scales of fees are available, most building surveyors don't adopt any of these scales (unlike most local authorities).

Hence, other basis like the level of competition, nature and size of projects and the types of services to be provided are used to set professional fees. Fees are, however, frequently charged based on the nature and size of the project. In addition, the fees charged will be higher for a more complex project compared with the construction of a simple building. There is still room for negotiation after the fees are quoted by building surveyors. The larger building surveyors companies are usually able to give a discount because of their economies of scale. Some companies who are unable to offer lower fees would try to attract clients by differentiating their services from their competitors. Some clients are willing to pay more to engage a firm of good reputation. Hence, it is not fees alone that will attract clients. The image perceived by clients is also of great importance.

If building surveyors decide to build competitive advantage around price, it should be careful not to start a price war. We have seen in the UK how small players get squeezed out of the market this way. It counteracts economic stability and development.

A few examples on how to differentiate price - by offering larger / repeat customers discounts, credit facilities, discounts, allowances to Architects (for recommendation) and other "middlemen". Ways in which building surveyors can differentiate on price also include offering credit, price flexibility and discounts. Building surveyors must make sure they set their prices right. Building surveyors should analyse competition in the target market and the cost of the marketing mix. Also it should estimate customer reaction to various prices before deciding on pricing strategies and policies.

6.1.3 Promotion

Figure 9 Marketing Mix Promotion

Promotion is any method of informing, persuading or reminding clients about the marketing mix of product, place and price. The most commonly used promotional tools in the construction industry are advertising the company's profile printed in the form of brochures, maintaining personal and past business contacts through entertainment and personal visits to potential clients.

What most building surveyors have been doing is only promotion. The extent of promotion also varies from firm to firm. Smaller firms may not want to spend too much on promotion due to their limited budget. In addition, some building surveyors take part in seminars to make themselves known to the marketplace (e.g. HSE awards or NHS exhibitions), provide eye-catching logos, build up the firm's reputation through consistent and efficient work and a proper compilation of the company's profile and previously completed projects.

The purpose of promotion is to sell a firm's services through informing, persuading and reminding the market. These are achieved through advertising, personal selling activities and other direct forms of publicity and indirect forms of communication such as public relations. Personal selling frequently mixes pleasure and selling together. Top management may interact with existing and potential clients at restaurants, seminars, trade associations and other places where they can, at the same time, enjoy themselves. This form of selling can be time-consuming and costly. Hence, a limit on capping personal selling may be required.

Some of the public relations tools used may include brochures, newsletters, information sheets and sponsorship of conferences and exhibitions. When using these tools, their functions and costs should be considered. In order to differentiate promotion – building surveyors could be innovative in communication with clients. Some firms use database marketing to get information direct to customers, use latest technology (web page, send e-mail updates on what's new, etc.), ensure its advertising is unique and different from competitors, stress benefits together with mentioning price. Tools in marketing communication are advertising (targets, own in-house publication, media type), publicity, sales promotion (competitions, launches, show stands, coupons, discounts) personal selling (type of people we employ, how motivated they are), sponsorships & direct marketing.

6.1.4 Place

Figure 10 Marketing Mix Place

Location of the firm is not always an important factor as clients do not frequently visit them. However, a few of the larger building surveying firms are located in the major cities e.g. London, Birmingham, Manchester, Bristol, Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, etc. However some firms like Butler & Young have twenty-two offices strategically located within the UK and they are therefore located nearer to their clients & projects. Thus they will be able to save on the costs and time spent on travelling. Companies should however be concerned with how accessible their services are to their clients.

Channels are designed by firms to deliver their services more effectively to clients. If the firm's target segment is in the central business district, a head office is best located in that area (Butler & Young's case London and Certis in Brisbane). If the firm is dealing with a large project which will last for a substantial period of time, it may want to set up a temporary office on that particular site.

6.1.5 People

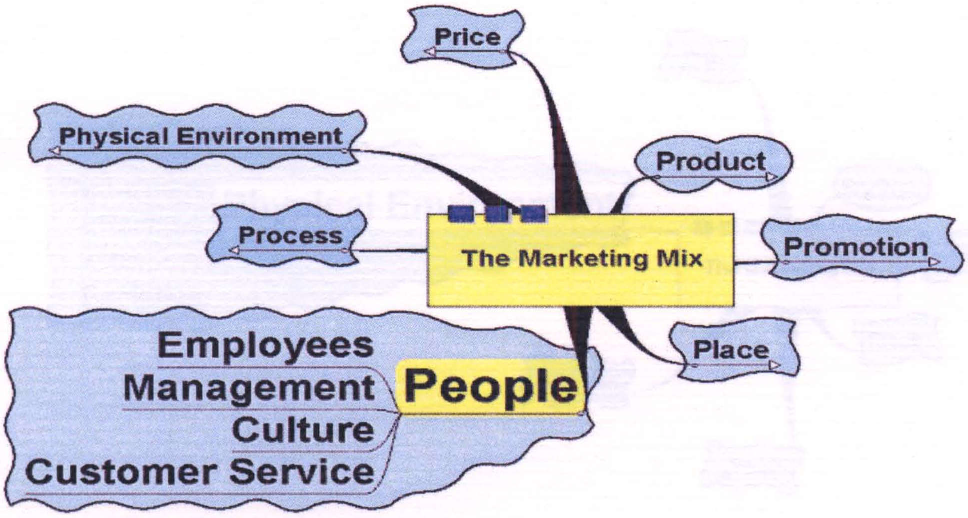

Figure 11 Marketing Mix People

The service personnel are the people who provide building surveying services to its clients. They are important because they represent the firm and form the company's image through their behaviour and attitudes. If service personnel are cold or rude, they can undermine all the marketing work done to attract customers. If they are friendly and warm, they can increase customers' satisfaction and loyalty (Kotler, 1982). Clients' perceptions of the quality of services can also be influenced by other clients. There are a few ways in which companies may maintain and improve the quality of their personnel as well as their performance. These are:

- careful selection and training of service personnel
- activate awareness towards marketing within the organisation
- using practices to achieve consistent behaviour from employees
- ensuring consistent physical appearance
- reducing the importance of personal contacts
- careful control through an internal service personnel audit

6.1.6 Physical environment

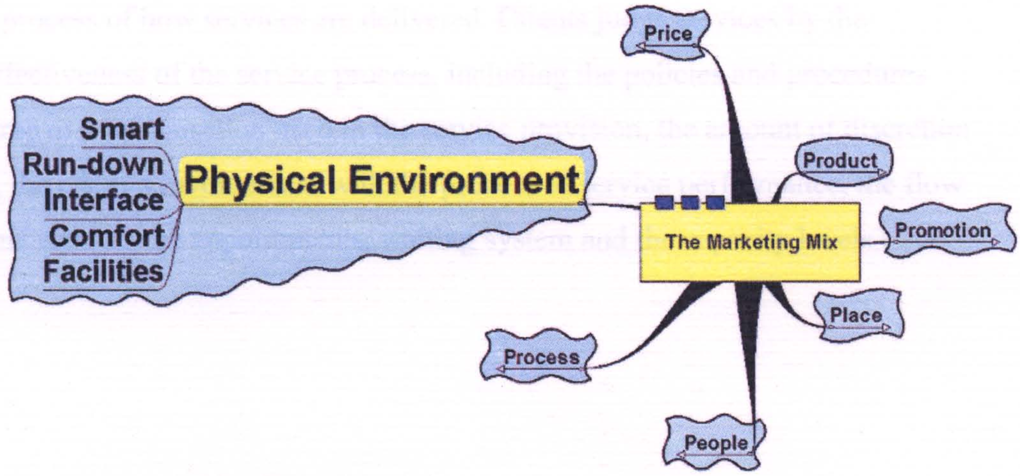

Figure 12 Marketing Mix Physical environment

Physical environment can help to create the environment and atmosphere where the services are performed and to influence clients' judgement of the firm. They can include the facilitating goods that enable the services to be performed (for example, plan check reports, surveys, consultation documents, approval notices & final certificates) and other tangible clues (e.g. brochures). It is difficult to measure, define and control the image that is perceived by the client as image can be very subjective. Hence, there is a need to manage physical evidence to ensure that the image conveyed conforms with the image desired.

6.1.7 Process

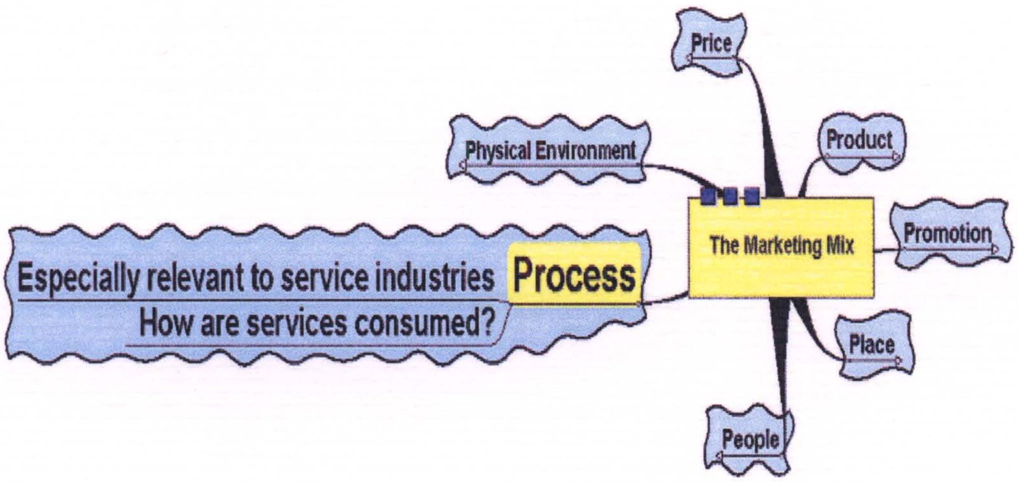

Figure 13 Marketing Mix Process

Clients are not only interested in the end results from the building surveyors; they are also interested in the process of how services are delivered. Clients judge services by the efficiency and effectiveness of the service process, including the policies and procedures adopted, the degree of mechanisation used in the service provision, the amount of discretion employees have, the client's involvement with the process of service performance, the flow of information and service, the appointments, waiting system and the capacity levels available.

7. Findings

7.1 Introduction

The research sample comprised twelve completed questionnaires returned from a research population of twenty participants. This amounted to a sample size of 15%. Champion (1981) recommended a sample size of 10% where the population size is "not gigantic". This sample size did bear on the statistical tests used for data analysis.

7.1 Application of methodology

An e-mail questionnaire survey was conducted to establish whether and how much and what degree were building surveying firms both in the UK and Australia utilising the P`s of the marketing mix. Whereas an interview method would have facilitated greater flexibility and depth of questioning, the extent of the population from which information was to be gathered militated against the use of this method. Questionnaires were sent to individuals rather than firms. Questionnaires were sent to those shown in appendix 10.4, the total survey size amounting to twenty firms. Twelve replies were received, of which all were suitable for analysis. This constituted a response rate of 60%, which is considered acceptable for a survey of this nature.

The instructions accompanying the questionnaire stressed the relatively high demand that completing the questionnaire would make upon respondents. The instructions also indicated the purpose of the survey; promised feedback to contributing organisations and guaranteed anonymity in the published results. Respondents were provided with the questionnaire and an e-mail address for the return of the completed questionnaire. The covering letter requested that the completed questionnaires be returned within three weeks of the despatch of the survey. It was envisaged that the questionnaire would be completed by various levels of management within different organisations.

The questionnaire was divided into nine sections dealing with: the nature and definition of the marketing mix, section A then dealt with gaining an insight into the participants and his role in the company, and the remaining seven sections dealing with each one of the 7 P`s of the marketing mix.

7.3 Findings of the research question

7.3.1 Marketing Mix

The marketing mix concept was explained to those respondents who have not heard of it before. The extended marketing mix for services consists of seven Ps (Borden, 1965; McCarthy, 1960). These are the product, price, promotion, place, people, physical evidence and process. Some smaller building surveying firms have never heard of the seven Ps before and are obviously not clear of their importance to their respective organisation's. However, from the field study, it became clear that different firms have different levels of emphasis on each of these elements in the marketing mix.

Table 3 shows the importance of each component of the marketing mix as indicated by the twelve responding firms. It can be seen from Table 3 that most respondents felt that product, price and people are the three most important components of the marketing mix.

This dissertation has researched the marketing mix framework for building surveying firms to market their services to their clients. The marketing mix concept presented in this dissertation also provides the foundation for the survey, which examined the desirable attributes which building surveying firms should possess from the viewpoints of both themselves and their major clients. Consistent with the marketing mix concept for the marketing of services, the survey results showed that the building surveyors rated the "people factor" as a very important attribute which building surveying firms should possess.

The "people factor" includes the marketing team's dedication and total commitment, their ability to achieve desired results, their experience and qualifications as well as their professionalism in handling deals. It also refers to the building surveying firm's creativity in marketing, ability to provide good service and keeping up to date with property trends. Factors not considered important by building surveying are the "physical factors", like location of the their firm's office nearby or in a good-class and easily accessible building, adequate parking facilities and facilities for meetings and displays.

	Product	**Physical evidence**	**Price**	**Promotion**	**Place**	**People**	**Process**
	How important is above element of marketing to the success of your organisation on a scale of 1 to 10? (10 being the highest – please circle)						
Firm 1	6	7	7	8	7	7	5
Firm 2	7	8	9	6	3	8	6
Firm 3	9	8	7	8	8	10	8
Firm 4	8	7	5	8	7	8	7
Firm 5	7	5	9	4	6	9	6
Firm 6	8	4	8	7	4	9	8
Firm 7	10	4	5	3	3	9	4
Firm 8	8	3	9	2	4	8	3
Firm 9	10	6	4	5	3	9	9
Firm 10	7	6	5	6	6	9	6
Firm 11	10	2	8	4	5	10	5
Firm 12	9	4	7	5	6	8	6
Rating	**2nd**	**6th**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**1st**	**4th**

Table 3 Responses of Building Surveyors to the Seven Ps

7.3.2 Better employee recruitment practices

In terms of questions 42 – 44, training & recruiting can only go so far in inculcating the right attitudes in employees. As was highlighted during some answers surveyors who have spent most of their careers working on highly technical matters and talking mostly to one another will not easily adopt marketing and selling skills. The organisation should gradually hire more client- centred professionals. Some individuals are naturally more service minded and friendlier than others and this can be included as criteria for hiring.

As can be seen by several participants marketing training should consist of initial training sessions and subsequent reinforcement training session, first for top management and partners / directors. Their understanding and support are essential if marketing is to work within the organisation. The training may take place at the firm's headquarters – like BYL or Certis, but may work best in an off-site location (as seen by BYL having 22 offices this may be seen as less distraction). However in contrast Certis only has two office locations and therefore n their particular situation it may be feasible to take place at one of them.

The training programme should consist of highly professional presentations of marketing concepts, cases, and planning exercises. From there, further presentations can be made to other staff members. These presentations should cover marketing opportunity identification, market segmentation, positioning, marketing mix, planning and control as well as pricing and communication skills.

7.3.3 Fee setting

With regards to question 22, 90% of the participants the most common fee setting approach were stated as hybrid. Generally they chose a section of the other type of fee setting approaches e.g. fixed sum, time & expenses, value and industry based. This indicates that obtaining the "ideal" price is no mean feat and takes a great deal of responsibility and skill to ascertain and therefore keep both the clients satisfied whilst maintaining profit and keeping costs down.

7.3.4 Place

It can be seen that in questions 26 – 30 only 35% of the participants stated that by opening new office locations was important because it offered a reduction in time and expenses needed to travel in order to inspect work. Also it allowed clients to visit their offices with less expense and difficulty. It was also noted that some participants stated to be more "personal" to clients in that they provided a local presence to serve the geographical area.

However, 65% stated that they were located only in one office location in order not to increase costs & revenue by:

- Providing an uncoordinated approach to the service and thus increase wasted time & expense.
- Wasted time & expense by moving staff around the country and the cost of recruitment for new offices.
- Taking talented personnel away from the "home" office where they might be able to attract more work through already established contacts and networks.

One of the major findings in relation to place was stated that due to the power of Internet, e-mail, etc. It was quite obvious that it didn't always matter where the office was. The service level could be provided in an effective way to the client and almost wouldn't concern the client where the office was located. The development of a "virtual office" via the Internet is an excellent example of a point of access that is both assessable and convenient for the clients. Combined with both the telephone including mobile e.g. blackberry (e-mails accessed wherever you are located) and normal landline provide both the client and the building surveyor with a mobile office.

7.3.5 Physical evidence

It was noted that in question 47, nearly 80 % of the answers given by the participants stated that aside from letterheads and business cards the firms did not provide any additional physical evidence. They considered this strand of the 7 P`s as one of the least important. Included in the section was the fact that 85% stated they do not consider differentiation when it comes to marketing.

7.3.6 Marketing mix strategy

It can be seen in question 6 that only 60% of the participants had a marketing strategy. It may be that the organisation without this strategy should choose a marketing mix strategy that will support and reinforce its chosen competitive position. The organisation should also consider charging higher fees and have a large scale communication program to inform clients that their business is eagerly sought. Thus, the chosen competitive position dictates the elements of the marketing mix that the firm must emphasise.

7.3.7 Marketing responsibility

As shown in figure 14 the majority of participants indicated (question no.5) that everybody within the organisation fulfils the marketing role. Although this indicates everybody is keen not perform the marketing role it is clear that they may not follow / know how important the 7 P`s are and how to adopt them in order to increase client satisfaction, profitability, efficiency, marketability and shareholder satisfaction.

7.3.8 Pricing methods

With regard to pricing methods (question no.21) it can be clearly seen that the majority of clients of building surveyors firms are existing and repeat business clients who generally as shown in figure 15 below are given a discount /allowance on their fees. Although this does is not strictly in line with other services does however generally work with this industry. Some firms offer quality price interaction and differentiation but this is outweighed by general discounts and hence repeat business.

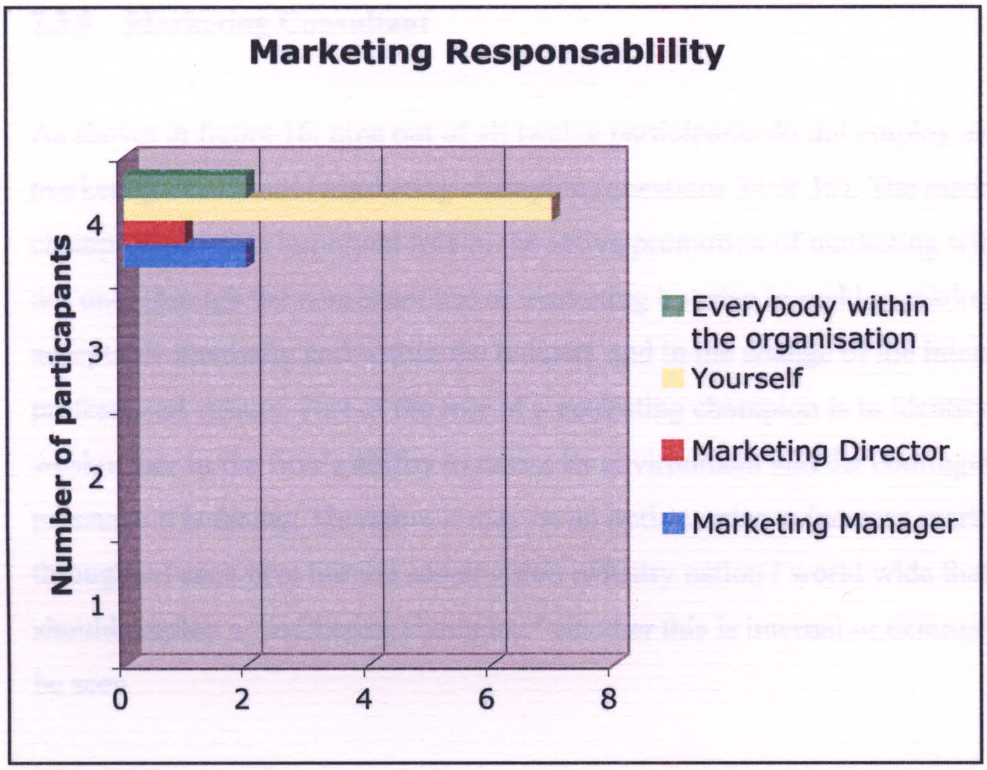

Figure 14 Marketing Responsibility

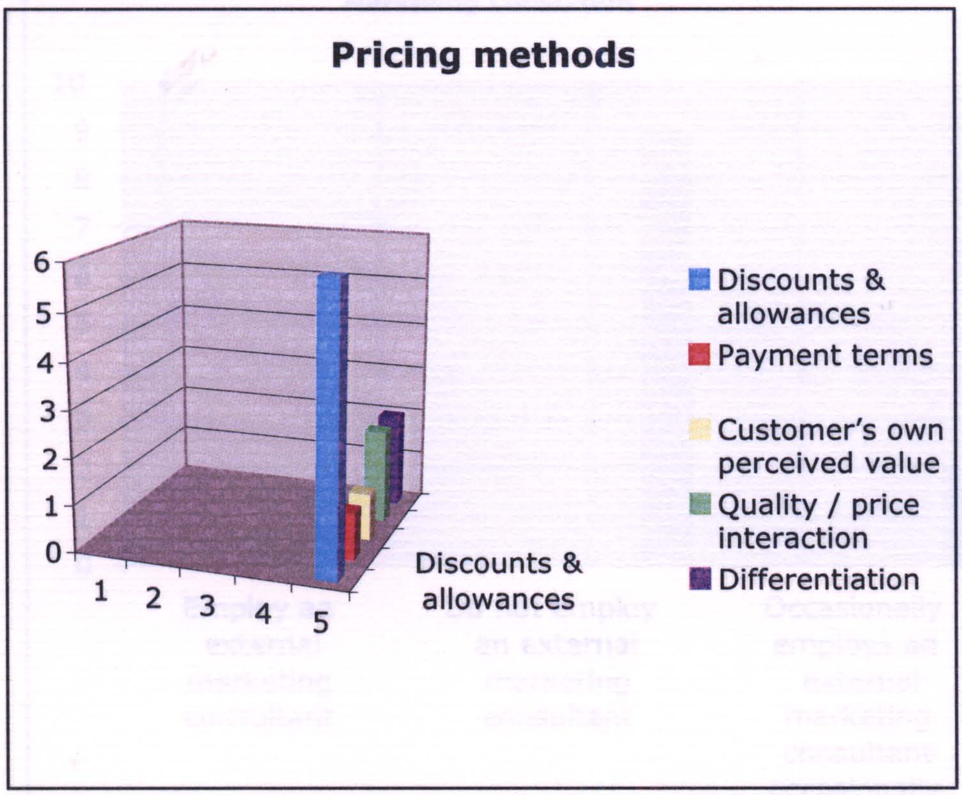

Figure 15 Pricing Methods

7.3.9 Marketing Consultant

As shown in figure 16, nine out of all twelve participants do not employ an external marketing consultant / marketing champion (questions 34 & 35). The marketing champion plays an important role in the active promotion of marketing within firms not only through the consistent use of marketing but also in making marketing acceptable internally and within the industry and in the change of the internal professional culture. Part of the role of a marketing champion is to identify weaknesses in the firm's ability to assess its environment and the contingency pressures it is facing. Therefore it may be an option order to increase marketing both throughout each firm but the construction industry nation / world wide that all firms should employ a "marketing champion" whether this is internal or external remains to be seen.

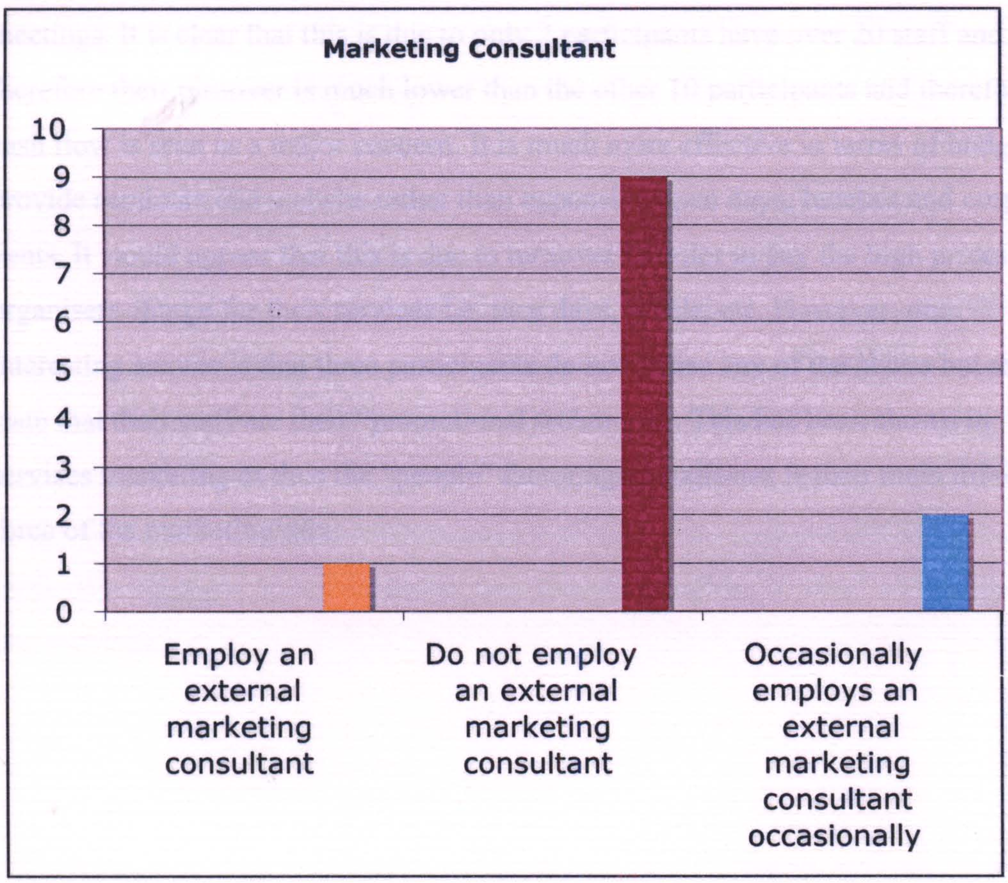

Figure 16 External Consultant

To summarise building surveying service industry like many other professional services experienced greater difficulty displaying / communicating their services, calculating costs accurately, setting prices, promoting their services and controlling service quality. These findings are consistent with the characteristics that define professional services, namely, professional services are most people-orientated and process-focussed than either service shops or mass services, and they have greater levels of customisation and employee direction (Silvestro *et al*, 1992).

7.3.10 Promotional techniques

With regards to promotional techniques (question 36) is can be clearly seen that (shown in figure 17 below) in the view of promotion techniques 50 % of the participants stated seminars & technical meetings were their main area of promotion. Only 2 out of 12 participants organises corporate events, open days and lunch meetings. It is clear that this is due to only 2 participants have over 20 staff and therefore their turnover is much lower than the other 10 participants and therefore cash flow is seen as a major concern. It is much more effective in terms of budgets to provide seminars and website rather than expensive open days, lunches and corporate vents. It would appear that this is due to turnover in order to pay the high prices organisers charge for their services i.e. race days, hotels, etc. However, one interesting answer is that three participants do not utilise any of the above but simply state that their staff are their “promotional technique”. This has been shown in services marketing as thus the “people” factor again indicates is their main driving force of the marketing mix.

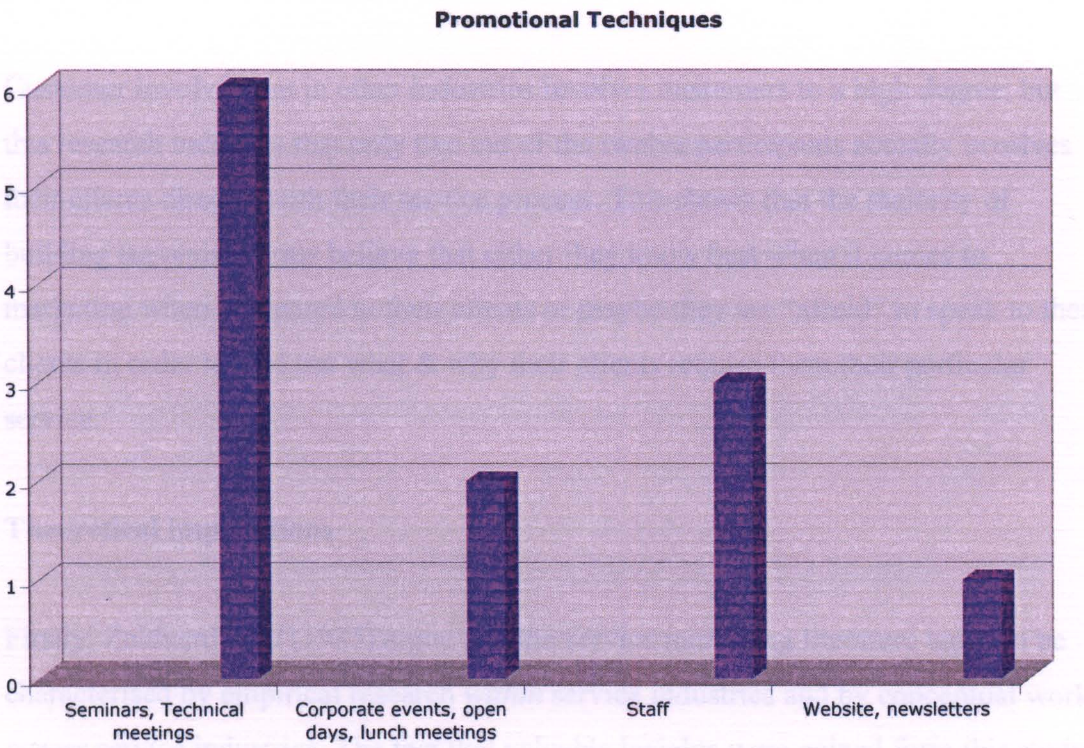

Figure 17 Promotional Techniques

7.3.11 Training & incentives

As indicated by answers for questions 41 to 43 it is shown that only one out of the twelve participants actually provides training on marketing and only two out of twelve provide some form of incentive – i.e. bonus. It indicates that the management either thinks it knows marketing and how it can assist their company or they are afraid to provide training to other members of staff. Also it shows that they do not think offering some sort of incentive may stimulate staff to "market" their business and services.

7.3.12 Customer involvement

Customer involvement in other industries involves customers to a high degree, but this research indicates that only two out of the twelve participants actually involves their clients directly with their service process. This shows that the majority of building surveying firms believe that either they know best when it comes to marketing when compared to their clients or maybe they are "afraid" to speak to their clients in order to find out what & why their clients require form their particular service.

7.4 Theoretical implications

Firstly, Zeithaml *et al* (1985) argue that the service marketing literature tends to be characterised by empirical research *within* service industries and by conceptual work *across* service industries. The fact that valuable insights were gained form this study which considered a wide range of building surveying firms suggest that empirical research into services marketing should be undertaken more frequently.

Secondly, there is a need for greater consideration of the service characteristic "lack of ownership"/ several authors included this characteristic when discussing the unique feature of services (Cowell, 1985; Gabbot & Hogg, 1994; Gronroos, 1978). However. Much of the services marketing literature does not consider lack of ownership a special characteristic of services, despite the fact that lack of ownership is included in almost every definition of services (Bateson, 1995; Palmer & Cole, 1995; Zeithaml *et al*, 1985)

8. Conclusions & Recommendations

8.1 The research question

The main research question can be formulated succinctly thus:

"Appraisal of the 7 P`s of Marketing in Respect of Building Surveying"

Specifically, it has been necessary to split this research question into objectives to be achieved, namely:

- Understanding of theoretical foundations based on existing literature of both marketing of services and the marketing mix

- Deeper understanding through a clearer definition of how building surveying firms (both in United Kingdom and Brisbane Australia) understand the elements of the marketing mix

- Better understanding of the types of the barriers and the theory behind the phenomenon of the marketing mix with building surveying firms. Compare and contrast with those actually used within firms

- To draw conclusions and make recommendations if applicable to firms using their marketing mix to its full marketing potential

8.2 Conclusions about the research question

This dissertation presents the results of a study into how building surveyors perceive the marketing mix concept. It also recommends how the seven elements in the marketing mix may be activated to help building surveying firms market their professional services more effectively. The development of a marketing orientation should be the very first mission of a professional service organisation seeking to become proficient at marketing.

It is about being conscious of a client's needs and caring for these needs. It is about identifying customers and their needs as well as deliberately directing the firm's resources to satisfy them. A marketing - oriented building surveying firm can be identified through the helpfulness of its building surveyors in solving its clients' problems.

This can be identified through the helpfulness of its surveyors in solving its clients' problems. However it can be seen that it will be difficult to educate experienced professional surveyors to make fundamental changes to the way they deal with clients because they feel that their ways have worked in the past and therefore do not see a need for change. In addition, they may be afraid to make mistakes when they are unfamiliar with a different approach. It may also be difficult to persuade the less experienced surveyors to contribute to marketing efforts because they do not yet have strong long-term commitments to their individual firm. They would prefer to focus their energies towards developing their skills in surveying rather than on developing marketing skills. Achieving a marketing orientation calls for several measures to be taken. These measures are:

Top management support

Firms are not likely to develop a strong marketing orientation until top management believes in it and wants to create the climate for marketing by talking about and encouraging it. Top management should then win support from lower management to influence other building surveyors within the organisation towards marketing.

- **Effective organisation design** - A professional surveyor who is much respected and well versed with marketing should head the company's marketing function. A simple organisation structure should be retained to keep the function effective.

- **In-house marketing training** - Seminars, to be conducted by top management, should be presented to all staff so that their understanding of marketing can be enhanced. The topics covered should include market identification, market segmentation, market targeting and positioning, market planning and control, fees setting, selling and marketing communication. Some firms provide internal marketing newsletter to update employees on the implementation of marketing.

- **Improved personnel practices** - The provision of training to staff will only instil the right attributes in them but may be unable to develop the relevant marketing skills. In order to rectify such a situation, firms can try to hire more client-centred and marketing-oriented surveyors. Some individuals are naturally more service minded and approachable than others and this can be a criterion for employment.

Rewards can be given to motivate employees to be more marketing- oriented. Although there is a risk in that employees may only concentrate on getting these rewards, with no intention of being genuinely marketing-oriented, this appears to be by far the most effective method for surveying companies. There are many changes occurring in the UK construction industry: a levelling of the trade cycle; methods of placing contracts; an increasing emphasis on quality, experience and innovations; and increasing competition among firms. No organisation or individual can escape change; change is a fact of life in organisations.

Hence construction firms must anticipate change and develop and offer training and development workshops so that managers and employees can adapt to those changes. Changes and the need to cope with them must be communicated effectively. The need for marketing planning is therefore paramount for each firm. Developing marketing plans, strategies and innovations will provide a considerable advantage over rivals and will be far more likely to win potential clients.

Structural changes in the construction industry require that the firms diversify and at same time adopt a strategy for integrating design and construction processes. This is with a view to developing joint venture projects and other relationship marketing strategies.

With the downward trend in the domestic output, a rising number of insolvencies, and the slow pace of economic recovery in the UK, there is an urgent need for UK construction firms to develop aggressive and more adaptive marketing strategies to improve their overseas output.

Construction clients' buying behaviours are changing. Scientific managerial techniques are now employed, with emphasis being placed on speed of delivery of services, value-based services, and cost-time-quality performance; although contract price still remains predominant, the clients are becoming decreasingly sensitive to price. Marketing is a dynamic process and marketing techniques need to change as the buying mechanism evolves through various stages. Marketing orientation is concerned with such dynamics and consequently is of particular relevance to the future of firms in the industry. Failure to understand the most appropriate marketing techniques during different stages may reduce clients' susceptibility to the marketing initiative, or possibly destroy the chances of a company winning over a particular client.

Pricing methods are rapidly shifting away from the traditional form of consultant-led methods to other forms, such as hybrid, discounts, framework agreements and other forms of pricing setting methods. This shift has encouraged more client participation in the whole construction process.

For a long-term competitive advantage, marketing strategy must be developed towards relationship marketing by developing strategic alliances such as package deals, partnering arrangements, joint ventures, framework agreements and offers of additional services to the client in addition to the building surveying services.

Some interesting results have been revealed by this dissertation. The findings that two thirds of the respondents possess neither a department nor a designated individual with responsibility for marketing reinforces Peck's (1994) view that some firms still struggle to understand and implement effective marketing programmes. There is a strong indication to suggest that these building surveying firms are still clinging to an outdated, bull-market philosophy: *`As long as we do good work we will always have plenty of work'*. The results further show that the majority of firms see marketing as an activity applicable to all employees. This is a promising development in contrast with the above situation, when remembering the long meetings of building surveying professional ethics committees in the early 1980s. Many building surveyors fought against various methods of marketing that might be interpreted as `self-laudatory'. Any overt effort to sell one's services was viewed as unprofessional. There is a general feeling from this study that these myopic values are no longer acceptable, hence the possibility of a growing positive approach to marketing. The vast majority of firms report a distinctly client-orientated approach to business. This is a good sign of marketing direction, reinforcing Ohmae's (1988) view that marketing is about discovering what the customers want and orienting the firm to satisfy those wants.

The client-orientated approach to business is close to current thinking in satisfying client's requirements. It is, however, difficult to understand the relative lack of importance attached to marketing communication strategy, when firms wish to make aware to potential clients their technical service excellence and professional image and reputation.

8.3 Contribution to knowledge of building surveying firms

The dissertation has been based on the assumption and has clearly demonstrated that building surveying firms need to be studied as a unique and distinctive form of organisation. Building upon the work of Greenwood and Hinings (1993) that views the professional organisation as an archetypal structure the dissertation has taken the more holistic' view to organisational structure to include its beliefs, values and ideas, through the research of organisational perceptions.

The professional organisation advocated by Powell, Brock and Hinings (1999), has a common thread that is the set of professional values, beliefs and aspirations that have been empirically studied by the present research and that characterise the professional organisation. Minzberg's professional bureaucracy is an organisation borne as a result of normative pressures and stems primarily from professionalisation, which are strong isomorphic forces. The key element in the professional organisation is that it incorporates institutional elements, which are legitimated externally, rather then in terms of productive efficiency. In addition, the professional organisation has been historically shaped as a professional archetype that uniquely combines ownership, management and the delivery of building surveying service.

This combination of professionalism based on institutional isomorphism and ownership structure makes the professional organisation responses to contingency forces totally unique and different from any other type of organisation.

8.4 Contribution to knowledge of marketing

This dissertation has built upon the work done by Hunt (1992), Kerin (1992), Day (1992) and Varadarajan (1992) and has shown that marketing can be looked upon as a manifestation of the free-market, profit-oriented economy and a catalyst for innovation and progress.

It is a societal process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating, offering and freely exchanging products and services of value with others. At organisational level, marketing acts as the organisation's interface with the environment. Varadarajan's definition of a boundary-spanning organisational function through its constant and continuous interface with the external environment at large and with its stakeholders as well as with the internal environment and the various groups within the organisation is particularly relevant as the empirical findings have demonstrated.

It places marketing clearly within thecontingency theory model, by showing that it is a response mechanism to customers' needs. If these needs change along to environmental changes, then marketing in theory follows with an appropriate response. A major contribution to marketing knowledge has been the identification of the concept of Marketing Champion, which is still unexplored and has uniquely emerged as an important factor in the process of reducing the barriers to marketing within professional firms.

8.5 Critical evaluation of adopted methodology

From a methodological point of view the dissertation has built upon Golden-Biddle and Locke's (1993) ethnographic research by contributing to the application and development of perceptual analysis. This approach puts greater importance on individuals' ideas, concepts, values and beliefs, which are expressed through language rather than on individuals' behaviour.

This accumulation of written material which becomes a 'text' has been subjected to a analytical approach similar to 'literary criticism', in effect an interpretation by the researcher based on the individuals' interviewed background and experience.

The uniqueness of the methodological contribution is that the written material has undergone two levels of analysis, the first analysed data at firm level based on one set of parameters, the second, analysed the twelve resulting analyses on a different set of parameters resulting in a meta-analysis. This has been used in the final discussion of findings.

8.6 Limitations of the study

The limitations that affected this research were time constraints and communicating with surveyors in both UK and Australia, to whom I was not permitted direct access. The research methodology methods were, with hindsight, not ideal for the type and range of data that the researchers sought. Direct comparative (or explanatory) case studies may have provided a greater depth of understanding about the research subject, whilst the limiting effects of these (focusing on perhaps one aspect of barriers / opportunities) could have been countermanded by the in-depth analysis such studies bring (Naoum, 2003). The data analysis techniques were limited by the sample size and the level of measurement of the data. This played an important role in only partially answering the research aims to any degree of significance.

Further research is required; to deepen the understanding of the research topic this could take the form of an analytical questionnaire, or for more detailed information, explanatory case studies. Such a study would allow for causality and would examine the relationships between variables in greater depth.

It would appear that there is some distance to travel to close the gap between the UK centric view of building surveying and the services they provide within the Australian concept of building surveying. Indeed some Australian building surveyors are marketing their services under the title building consultants. This flexibility and adaptability to market conditions has served the building surveying profession well in the past and may prove a successful strategy in the longer term in Australia.

Another important limitations of this research is the limitation of this study is the low response rate. As a result of the low response rate, interpretation of results must be made with extreme caution. Results of the various hypotheses analyses, including the logistic regression modeling may not be valid. Another limitation of this research is that it considered the marketing mix problems from the perspective of service providers, but did not include input from customers. To the extent that managers` perceptions have been influenced from customer feedback, there is an element of input form customers.

However, customer input should be explicitly sought and included in future research in order to understand customer` attitudes towards the commonly identified problems that arise from the marketing mix. For example, customer input may shed more light on the issues relating to inter-client interaction and customer control. This information could help services marketers to better manager the problems that have the greatest impact on their customers.

8.7 Opportunities for further research

Further research within the marketing of professional building surveying services field is obviously necessary and this contribution has attempted to establish some foundation for future studies. Such research might also encompass client perceptions of building surveyor marketing in general, and marketing communication in particular. Cultural dimensions to the implementation of the marketing concept would provide an interesting study within this professional environment.

Finally, research should be initiated in the area of service organisation strategy. Further research should investigate at least the following areas:

(1) The development of a framework of commonly cited services marketing strategies suggested to overcome the marketing problems stemming from the special characteristics of services;

(2) Identifying the strategies employed by service organisations to overcome the marketing problems they face;

(3) Determining whether different service types use different service strategies as implied, but not tested, by Silvestro *et al (*1992) and Lovelock (1983); and

(4) Continuing assessment of the impact of service marketing strategies on an organisation's profitability, customer retention and the level of customer satisfaction as expressed by its customers.

8.8 Marketing Mix

The ongoing debate surrounding the Marketing Mix as a marketing management tool has been primarily fought on theoretical rather than empirical level. This due to lack of reliable research data on the way the Mix is used by practitioners dealing with marketing problems as well as lack of data about the exact effects of the P`s on the success or failure of marketing programs. This means that a clear and undisputed answer to the question whether the mix will survive as the marketing tool of the 21st century requires further research and debate. The majority of researchers and writers have reviewed the mix and have expressed serious doubts as to the role of the Mix as marketing management tool in its original form, proposing alternative approaches: adding new parameters to the original Mix or replacing it with alternative frameworks altogether.

Doubts on the hands-on practical value of the Mix as a marketing toolkit are echoed by scepticism expressed as to its value as a teaching tool (Rafiq and Ahmed, 1992). Some of the weaknesses of the 7 P`s identified in this dissertation are domain-specific: ignoring the human factor, lack of strategic dimensions, offensive posture and lack of interactivity.

Two limitations however seem to be common in all reviewed categories: The model's internal orientation and the lack of personalisation.

The internal orientation of the Mix – the lack of explicit market input in the framework stems from the origin of the concept. The Mix was originally developed as a concept suitable for marketing of consumer products in the mass-oriented US manufacturing sector of the 60's, an era when producers could afford to pay much less attention to customer's voice and needs than today. Applying the Mix as basis of Marketing Planning in its original form in today's highly competitive, dynamic and technology-mediated markets (McKenna, 2003) can lead to serious undermining of the firm's competitive position.

Marketing efforts in today's and future marketplace are likely to succeed if they are based on close and constant monitoring of the external environment, with special attention on the frequently changing customer behaviour and needs. Competition, trends and macro-environment are also elements reacquiring constant attention.
If marketing is to exist as a significant value-adding corporate activity in the future (Porter, 1985), marketers must focus their attention on getting better insight on the dynamics and the constantly changing rules of the marketing environment of the 21st century. Instead of managing the 7 P`s-defined processes managers should focus on the factors underlining customer value as well as building market-oriented, flexible and inventive organisations, able to constantly innovate and adapt to fast-changing market conditions.

The lack of personalisation i.e. the mass-market orientation of the Mix, can likewise be traced in the origin of the framework. Significant shifts of consumer behaviour (individualisation, diminishing brand preference, value orientation, increasing sophistication etc.) have undermined the effectiveness of the impersonal one-way communication and the mass marketing approaches. The constant stream of new technologies available to businesses and customers not only reduces transaction and switching costs but also offers to customers more choices, global access of products or services and new possibilities in addressing individual and very specific needs. In such an environment the service and the personalised client approach have become imperatives; one should expect that the Marketing in the 21st century will become not only more sophisticated but also much more interactive and individual. The quality of the personal relationship between seller and customer and successful customer retention are becoming basic ingredients of commercial performance in all markets, either consumer or institutional ones. Evaluating the standing of a marketing axiom as the 7 P`s Marketing Mix is a complex issue and arguments will be always open to debate. Sceptics might even question the very logic of disputing the merits of the Mix, arguing that the way of applying a tool is what really matters, rather than the tool itself. The findings of this dissertation support the frequently expressed opinion that marketing management and teaching is ripe for a paradigm shift, at least within the reviewed marketing domains. New concepts proposed should adequately deal with the new realities of marketing the old Mix was never meant to address.

An essential parameter for any theoretical development is the trust of the marketing practitioner in the 7P`s; marketers have embraced the Mix for more than 40 years, despite the lack of solid evidence that the concept is actually better than other alternatives. For all intents and purposes practitioners will endorse a new framework only if they are persuaded that this can meet their management and planning needs better than the 7P`s, while upholding the Mix's essential features, namely simplicity, applicability and richness.

8.9 Implementation and control

The marketing process includes developing supportive culture by allocating resources, redirecting efforts, preparing budgets, developing and utilising information systems and motivating individual employees to action. Resource allocation is central to any management activity which allows for strategic implementation. According to David (1991), effective resource allocation does not, in itself, guarantee successful strategy implementation because programme, personnel, controls, and commitment must breathe life into the resources provided. Resources in the marketing context include: funds, manpower skills, technology, research and development, management support and commitment to marketing objectives.

The successful implementation of any new marketing programme hinges on managers' ability to motivate employees and also on interpersonal skills. The challenge is to stimulate managers and employees throughout the organisation to work with pride and enthusiasm towards achieving objectives. Marketing programmes / strategies should be executed according to the planned order of preference and objectives. The controlling function of management includes all those activities undertaken to ensure that the actual operation conforms to the planned operation. With effective control systems it is possible to identify immediately which areas need adjusting, as the implementation progresses by taking prompt remedial action when necessary.

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10. Appendices

Appendix AQuestions and comments from semi structure interviews

Dates : **9th and 16th March 2007**

Venue:

Interviewees: **er)**

Q1 What is marketing? How do you define Marketing?

We concentrate on relationship marketing. We do not advertise we are a medium-sized firm and we believe that using relationship marketing we can target our audience more effectively than advertising. We have also used a limited amount of Public Relations. Because of the size of the firm when using PR, we have found out that we do not have huge stories the papers want to know about. Knowing the people, this is what we understand by marketing at Certis is all about, it is not advertising, it is not PR, here anyway. We have a determined effort to build up client relations. Note: distinction needs to be made between the practice of modern Marketing and client relationship development as having been practiced traditionally. Also distinction to be made between a personal vs. the firm vs. the profession's interpretations.

Q2 Are the Direct Marketing campaign based on existing database or new?

Everybody in the firm knows the value and importance of the database for marketing purposes. Everybody in the firm knows, that any new information about new client or contacts has to be entered into the database. There could be damage to the firm if any information in the database is incorrect.

Q3 How do you monitor Direct Marketing responses? How do you follow up on responses? Do you have mailing lists I suppose?

Yes, just recently, we have done a campaign consisting of 4 postcards sent to contacts. The response received from that we managed to compile the data from the response we got back from the clients and contacts and we were able to assess the success of the campaign. In respect to the rate of response received, it is a very recent campaign so it is hard to assess the profitability of the campaign. We are in process of producing a new what is called a 'Property Update', an e-mailed Newsletter containing news and articles covering all the current legal issues which affect the property industry. We specialise in the residential and commercial property developments, so basically the campaign response card included a space for the e-mail address, so we can get their e-mail addresses and put them onto our database.

Q5 What sort of training do you do?

We have a monthly marketing meeting for all the departments in the firm. We have marketing meetings for all of them. These meetings have also been used to do training sessions such as trying to promote the services of the company.

Q6 How is Marketing being practiced here?

6.1. Who is responsible for Marketing?
At what level: board, directors with marketing responsibilities, marketing professional, background, level of education, training, experience, externally / internally acquired, remuneration, involvement in decisions on marketing resource allocation

6.2. Marketing department: size, responsibilities, budgets, achievements, training, recruitment, prospects, and future

6.3. Measurement of marketing results: client satisfaction surveys, monitoring of client response & new business, other methods

6.4. Use of marketing research: understanding clients buying behaviour, competitor intelligence

6.5. Use of marketing planning: regular marketing audits, competitive analysis, strategic marketing – part of overall firm's strategic planning

6.6. Relationship between fee-earners and the marketing unit: overlap, separate, status, and involvement in marketing

6.7. Branding: understanding, importance, differentiation and process

6.8. Communication methods used: Advertising, PR, Direct mail, Events, Internet, and Sponsorships

6.9 Use of new technologies: Internet, website, e-mail, video-conferencing

6.10. Internal marketing: staff involvement in marketing, staff training in client care

6.11. Marketing training: marketing orientation programmes for staff.

Q7. Business environment

7.1. Clients: retention and acquisition rates

7.2. Competitors: nature of relationships, friendship and attrition

7.3. Take-overs: friendly, hostile, alliances

7.4. New entrants – rate of entry

7.5. Professional associations

7.6. Professional education

7.7. Professional culture (external)

7.8. Government, EU policies affecting industry & firm

7.9. Technology

7.10. Environmental uncertainty levels: in control, out of control

Q8. Information regarding the interviewees

8.1. Name

8.2. Title

8.3. Role within the organisation

8.4. Personal interest / disinterest in marketing

Q9. General information about the firm

9.1. Name

9.2. Address

9.3. Size/ Revenue /Number of directors

9.4. Age of firm, age of directors

9.5 Professional culture (internal)

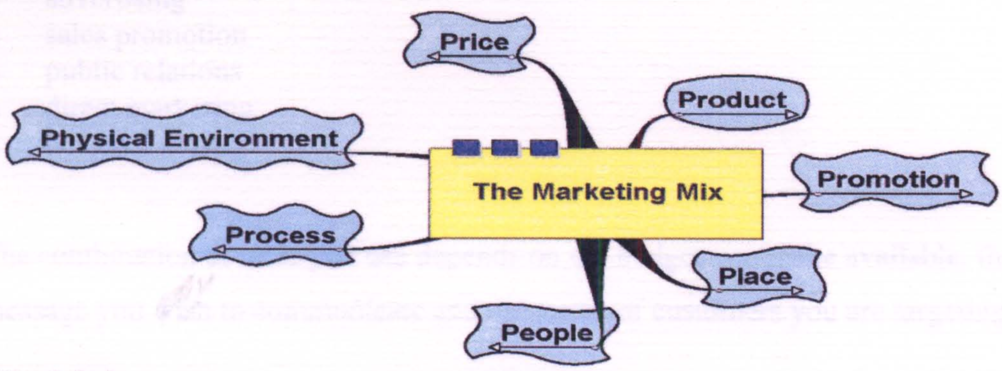
9.6. Learning environment?

Appendix B Questionnaire

An Appraisal of the 7 P`s of Marketing in Respect of Building Surveying Questionnaire

Definition of 7 Ps of marketing

In order to test the applicability and use of the 7 P`s the following 2 pages defines the 7 P`s and provides a brief overview of its principles. The marketing mix is a term used to describe the combination of tactics used by a business to achieve its objectives by marketing its products or services effectively to a particular target customer group. It is also referred to as the 7 Ps - Product, Price, Process, Promotion, Place, People and Physical Evidence.



Why it is important

Businesses need to make sure they are marketing –

- The right product /service to
- The right person at
- The right price in
- The right place and at
- The right time

Product

Marketing is about identifying, anticipating and satisfying customer needs. You need to be sure that your products and services continue to meet your customer's needs.

Process

The processes involved in delivering your products and services to the customer have an impact on the way in which our customers perceive you.

Price

Price generates profit so is an important element of the mix.

Place

Place is the means of distribution you select depending on the type of product or service you are marketing. Your choice will impact on your pricing and your promotion decisions.

Promotion

The promotional mix is made up of 5 elements:

- advertising
- sales promotion
- public relations
- direct marketing
- personal selling

The combination of tools you use depends on the budget you make available, the message you wish to communicate and the group of customers you are targeting.

People

The people employed in your organisation will determine the quality of service your customers receive. This is truer for services, but also impacts on businesses making tangible products. Happy, skilled and motivated staff make happy customers. They are more likely to think about the customer and deliver good customer service if they are well trained and are recruited for their positive attitude to customers.

Physical Evidence

Physical evidence is a term used to describe the type of image that your business portrays through its physical presence, namely its premises, the appearance of its staff, its vehicles, etc. When customers do not have anything that they can touch, see or try before they buy, they are more likely to assess you by the image you put across. It is therefore particularly important if you offer services rather than tangible products.

Questionnaire

Section A

1. What sector of Building surveying / building control do you work in? (please tick one)

   Approved Inspectors ☐
   Local Authority ☐
   Building Certifier ☐

2. How many building surveyors / building control surveyors work in your organisation? (please tick one)

   0 - 5 ☐
   6 - 10 ☐
   11 - 15 ☐
   16 -30 ☐
   More than 31 ☐

3. How long have you been employed by your organisation? (please tick one)

   0 – 1 year ☐
   1 – 2 years ☐
   2 – 3 years ☐
   3 – 5 years ☐
   5 – 10 years ☐
   More than 10 years ☐

4. What is your organisations approximate annual turnover?

   Australia $ ☐
   GB Pounds ☐

   Less than 1 Million ☐
   Between 1 – 2 Million ☐
   Between 2 – 4 Million ☐
   Between 4 – 6 Million ☐
   Between 6 – 10 Million ☐
   More than 10 Million ☐
   Not known ☐

5. Within your organisation who performs the marketing role? (please tick one)

Marketing Manager	☐
Marketing Director	☐
Yourself	☐
Everybody within the organisation	☐
Nobody	☐
Other (please specify)	☐

6. Does your organisation have a marketing strategy? (please tick one)

Yes	☐
No	☐
Don't know	☐
In the process of formulating one	☐

7. What position do you hold in your organisation? (please tick one)

Chief Executive Officer / Chairman	☐
Managing Director	☐
Marketing Director /Manager	☐
Director	☐
Associate Director	☐
General Manager	☐
Manager	☐
Building Surveyor / Project Manager / BCO	☐
Other (please specify)	☐

8. How are you informed of any internal marketing news or strategy? (please tick one)

The grapevine	☐
Internal newsletter	☐
E-mail	☐
Line manager	☐
Organisation's intranet	☐
Marketing meetings	☐
Other	☐
Don't know	☐

9. Are you:

Full-time employed	☐
Part-time employed	☐
Other (please state)	☐

Section B Product

10. How important is service element of marketing to the success of your organisation on a scale of 1 to 10? (10 being the highest – please circle)

    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

11. On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being the highest) how do you rate your organisation's success in relation to its service? (please circle)

    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

12. What are your service line objectives, e.g. your professional advice, additional work, increase image, etc?

13. Are there any particular services that are not currently relevant?

14. Are there any new services that are emerging through your industry?

15. How do you differentiate your services from others in terms of the following? (use additional pages if necessary)

Quality	
Uniqueness	
Brand Name	
Warranty	
Capabilities	
Presentation	

Section C Price

16. How important is price element of marketing to the success of your organisation on a scale of 1 to 10? (10 being the highest – please circle)

    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

17. On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being the highest) how do you rate your organisation's success in relation to its price? (please circle)

    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

18. What are your organisations pricing objectives, policies, strategies and procedures?

19. Do your customers see your organisation's price as being in line or out of line with the perceived value of its offer?

20. Does your organisation use promotional pricing effectively e.g. predatory pricing or tactic pricing?

21. Can you provide information on the following that your organisation uses in relation to its pricing? (use additional pages if necessary)

Level	
Discounts & allowances	
Payment terms	
Customer's own perceived value	
Quality / price interaction	
Differentiation	

22. Does your organisation price its services by any of the following – if so provide details of how this is structured?

(a) Time & expenses

(b) Fixed sum

(c) Percentage

(d) Performance based

(e) Value Based

(f) Comparative / industry comparison based

(g) Hybrid / combination of any of the above

Section D Place

23. How important is place / location element of marketing to the success of your organisation on a scale of 1 to 10? (10 being the highest – please circle)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

24. On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being the highest) how do you rate your organisation's success in relation to its place / location? (please circle)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

25. In your organisation how many offices locations do you have?

Australia ☐
UK ☐

0 - 1 ☐
2 - 4 ☐
5- 10 ☐
more than 10 ☐

26. How does your organisation decide how many office locations it wants to operate from?

27. What strategic elements did your organisation use to choose its locations?

28. How did the organisation offset its costs from opening additional offices?

29. What features does your organisation look for when choosing a location?

30. What if any difficulties has your organisation found when opening an office in a new location e.g. recruitment, telecommunications, access, parking, IT, human resources, etc?

31. Do your customers gain any added value directly due to your office locations within the market place?

Section E Promotion

32. How important is promotion element of marketing to the success of your organisation on a scale of 1 to 10? (10 being the highest – please circle)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

33. On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being the highest) how do you rate your organisation's success in relation to its promotion? (please circle)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

34. Does your organisation pay an external company to provide advertising? If yes, what value do you receive from this investment?

35. If your organisation does not employ a company to assist in advertising then give reasons why not e.g. affordability, never thought of it, secrecy or used one before and did not achieve?

36. What promotion techniques and methods does your organisation utilise?

37. Do you promote your organisation through the process of service delivery e.g. web access, intranet, documentation, words of approval, etc?

38. How does your organisation identify and respond to changes in the industry environment and do you share this knowledge with your clients?

Section F People

39. How important is the people element of marketing to the success of your organisation on a scale of 1 to 10? (10 being the highest – please circle)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

40. On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being the highest) how do you rate your organisation's success in relation to its people? (please circle)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

41. Does your organisation provide its employees with a form of service delivery incentive e.g. individual, group, etc. If so what way do you believe they work?

42. Do you involve your customer in day-to-day contact in the service delivery, if so how and what degree of involvement do you provide e.g. regular communication, meetings, etc?

43. Does your organisation provide formal or any other type of training to its employees in terms of marketing, if so provide examples?

44. What methods of recruitment & selection does your organisation have in respect of the following?

Political awareness / discretion	
Commitment	
Appearance	
Interpersonal behaviour	
Professionalism	
Customers focus	

Section G Physical evidence

45. How important is physical evidence element of marketing to the success of your organisation on a scale of 1 to 10? (10 being the highest – please circle)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

46. On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being the highest) how do you rate your organisation's success in relation to its physical evidence? (please circle)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

47. With regards to physical evidence what factors / importance do you place on the following?

(a) Packaging services e.g. letterhead, business cards, etc.

(b) Managing the service delivery process

(c) Socialising customers and employees with regard to their respective roles, behaviors and relationships

(d) Differentiating the organisation from its competitors

Section H Process

48. How important is process element of marketing to the success of your organisation on a scale of 1 to 10? (10 being the highest – please circle)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

49. On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being the highest) how do you rate your organisation's success in relation to its process? (please circle)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

50. Do you / your employer reward those who demonstrate an attitude towards marketing? If so what type of reward i.e. salary enhancement, shares, time off or other?

51. Do your customers stipulate / negotiate service delivery process time? If so how and to what level do you place emphasis on this?

53. Do you involve your customers with regards to the setting up of your processes or do they "fit in" with what you offer them – e.g. identification of needs, evaluation of alternatives, post purchase evaluation, etc?

54. Do you think there any ways of improving your existing service processes that deliver your services, if so give examples?

55. Does your process improvements generate additional work or increase customer service levels e.g. quality, responsiveness, if so give examples?

Appendix C Participants of the Questionnaire

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bury District Council
r & Young Ltd
S Building Control
on Building Control
is Pty Ltd
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ton Borough Council
vale Ltd
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sent Building Control

Table 4 Names of Participants

Appendix D Questionnaire cover letter

University of Chester

An Appraisal of the 7 P`s of Marketing in Respect of Building Surveying

Dear Kevin

You are invited to participate in the above research dissertation, which is being conducted by Gary Houghton. Your name and contact details have been drawn from my experience within the building surveying profession within the UK and Australia. This research will form part of my dissertation in order to gain a Masters of Business Administration within the University of Chester.

The aim of this dissertation is to understand the applicability of the 7 P`s and its principles of marketing to Building Surveying / Building Control businesses located in both the United Kingdom and Australia. The main items of consideration are they applicable and if so what forms do they take for in respect of the Building Surveying / Building Control service? This dissertation is about analysing marketing approaches employed by Building Surveying / Building control practices, to see how the 7P`s apply or whether they should apply. Should you agree to participate, you would be asked to contribute by completing the enclosed questionnaire, at a time convenient to you.

I intend to protect your anonymity and the confidentiality of your response and therefore throughout the dissertation there will be no reference to any individuals.

Once the data arising from this research has been completed, a copy of the findings will be available from myself in the form of an e-mailed report. It is also likely that the results will be presented at academic level at the University of Chester. This data will be kept securely for a period of 5 years, after which it will be destroyed.

Please be advised that your participation in this study is completely voluntary & should you wish to withdraw at any stage, or to withdraw any unprocessed data you have supplied, you are free to do so without prejudice.

Your agreement to participate by signing and dating the enclosed consent form and by completing the questionnaire would be very much appreciated. You can then return it to my e-mail address

In order to process this data gained from this questionnaire and therefore submit my findings within my dissertation I would be grateful if you could return it to me by 6th April 2007 via e-mail or fax to (outside Australia) on +00617 3367 1799 or within Australia on 07 3367 1799.

Should you require any further information, or have any concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me either by email (address above) or by phone on from UK +0061 73367 1755 or within Australia on 07 3367 1755.

Thank you once again for all your assistance in this research.

Yours sincerely

Gary Houghton, BSc (Hons), MRICS, Dip.Surv.

An Appraisal of the 7 P`s of Marketing in respect of Building Surveying

Questionnaire Consent Form

I, have read and understand the information above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this research, knowing that I can withdraw from further participation in the research at any time without consequence. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

Participant's Name:

Participant's Signature:

Date:

Investigator's Name: **Gary David Houghton**

Investigator's Signature:

Date: **19th March 2007**